



Brit. 231²-3 gleig

<36627979570015

<36627979570015

Bayer. Staatsbibliothek

CHELSEA HOSPITAL,
AND ITS TRADITIONS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“THE COUNTRY CURATE,” — “THE SUBALTERN,”
“THE CHRONICLES OF WALTHAM,” &c.

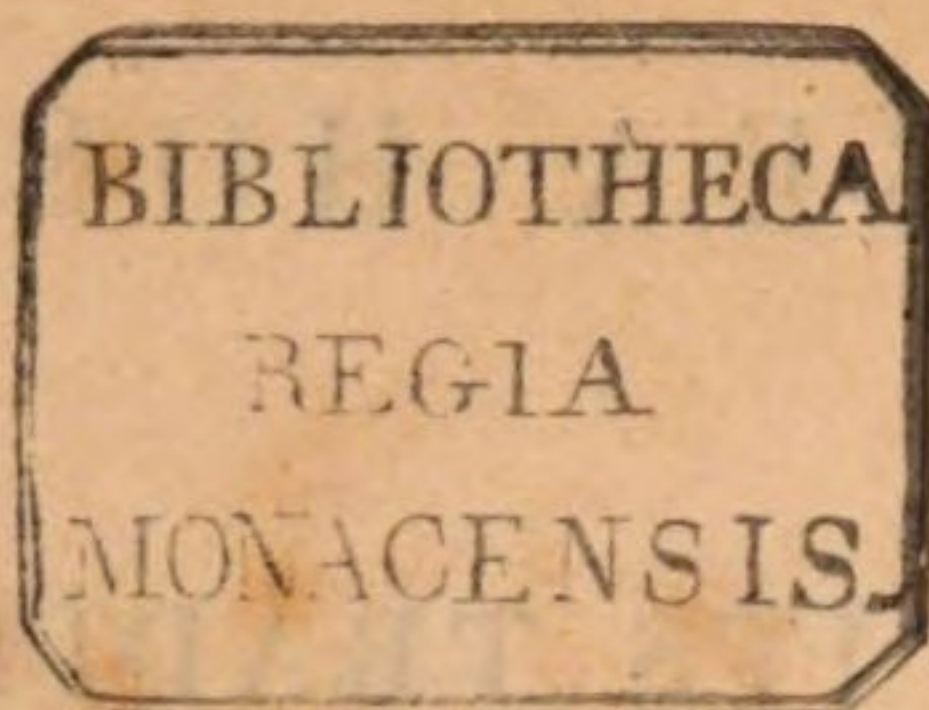
Go with old Thames, view Chelsea's glorious pile,
And ask the shattered hero whence his smile ;
Go view the splendid domes of Greenwich—go,
And own what raptures from reflection flow.
Hail ! noblest structures, imaged in the wave,
A nation's grateful tribute to the brave—
Hail ! blest retreats from war and shipwreck, hail !
That oft arrest the wandering stranger's sail.
Long have ye heard the narratives of age,
The battle's havoc and the tempest's rage ;
Long have ye known reflection's genial ray
Gild the calm close of valour's various day.

ROGERS.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY,
NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
1838.



BIBLIOTHECA

REGIA

MONACENSIS

CHELSEA HOSPITAL.

BOOK III.

CONTAINING MATTER CHIEFLY DESCRIPTIVE.

VOL. III.

B 20

THE FIRST HOSPITAL

CHAPTER I

THE FIRST HOSPITAL

It is a well-known fact that the first hospital was founded in the year 1000. It was founded by a man named John. He was a very rich man and he wanted to do something good for the world. He decided to build a hospital for the poor. He gave a lot of money to build the hospital and he also gave a lot of money to the people who worked there. The hospital was very successful and it was the first of its kind. It was a very good example of what a hospital should be. It was a place where the poor could go to get help and where the rich could go to get help. It was a place where everyone could get help and where everyone could be happy. The first hospital was a very good example of what a hospital should be. It was a place where the poor could go to get help and where the rich could go to get help. It was a place where everyone could get help and where everyone could be happy.

BRIEF ACCOUNT OF
CHELSEA HOSPITAL.

CHAPTER I.

*In which something is said of the localities of
Chelsea Hospital.*

I do not know how far I am called upon to describe, in detail, the architectural and local arrangements of Chelsea Hospital, which lying within the reach of every inhabitant of London, whether he be there for permanent or temporary purposes, may at any moment become to the curious an object of personal inspection. The work, if necessary under any circumstances, has not been entirely neglected. A patient historian, while dealing with the parish, within the bounds of which the Hospital stands, has said all, or nearly all, that can be said on such a subject. Still, as I do not write for the exclusive information of Londoners, and as Mr. Falkner's book, however meritorious, seems not to be universally known, a brief account of the

localities connected with the home of England's worn-out and gallant defenders, may not, perhaps, be misplaced when given as an introduction to what remains to be told.

Chelsea Hospital stands upon the left bank of the Thames, about two miles and a half above Westminster Bridge; and occupies, with the buildings, courts, gardens, and offices attached, an area of something more than fifty-four square acres. Its principal courts, or quadrangles, are three in number; of which the central alone existed in 1690; though the good taste of a modern architect has provided that no discordance in style should be anywhere perceptible between the *nucleus* and the additions which have, from time to time, gathered round it. Over the whole, there hangs an air of sobered and collegiate repose, as far removed from gloom on the one hand, as from garishness on the other; a character every way suitable to the purposes to which the edifice has been set apart, and in strict accordance with the habits and condition of its inmates.

The central court, which is open towards the south, and separated from what are called

the water-gardens only by a low iron railing, is closed in on the east and west by two ranges of buildings three hundred and sixty-five feet in length by forty in width; on the north and south by the hall and chapel, divided one from the other by a handsome cupola and gateway. In these long buildings, or wings, to the extent at least of two hundred feet, the old soldiers are chiefly housed—that is to say, such of them as are rated in the hospital books as privates, corporals, and sergeants. Sixteen wards or barracks arranged each into six-and-twenty bed-places, furnish the men with adequate accommodation; while the sergeants occupy cabins closed in, one at each extremity of the gallery, or ward in which it is their duty to preserve order. For the captains, and light-horse, again, of whom I have spoken elsewhere, distinct lodgings are provided. Some of the former occupy, to be sure, a portion of the eastern wing, though this is an arrangement of modern growth, and the result of changes and reductions in other departments. But the larger proportion of both classes have their domiciles fixed among the buildings that inclose the lesser and more modern quadran-

gles. Finally, at the southern extremity of each wing, so as to project into the water-gardens, are the apartments of the governor and lieutenant-governor, both comfortable dwellings, altogether free from ostentation, yet well fitted for the uses of the distinguished officers, to whom the honour of presiding over the first of England's military establishments may be assigned.

The chapel and hall present, when examined from without, a perfect uniformity of appearance. Each has its plain brick front, indented with tall arched windows; and each appears to lean upon the noble stone pillars that flank the central gateway; while along that face which looks in upon the square, is a piazza, or covered gallery. Beneath are benches, on which the old men may occasionally be seen smoking their pipes in the heat of a summer's day; while from either end branches off a passage, opening out a communication with the lesser, or flanking-quadrangles. Moreover, the cornice of this piazza bears a neat inscription, indicative of the purposes which the hospital is meant to serve, and partly commemorative of the names of the sovereigns to whom the country stands

indebted for so noble an institution. I do not think that any memorial remains of the individual by whom this legend was composed, — at least, I have not been able to trace it, if such there be. But the scroll itself is exceedingly appropriate ; it runs thus :

“In subsidium et levamen emeritorum senio belloque fractorum condidit Carolus secundus, auxit Jacobus secundus, perfecêre Gulielmus et Maria Rex et Regina.”

Finally, I may state, in reference to this part of my subject, that there is a statue of Charles the Second in the centre of the square, cast in bronze, in the garb of a Roman warrior, and facing the north. It is said to be the production of Gibbons ; but as a mere work of art, it cannot be very highly commended.

With respect to the lesser or flanking squares, they are given up entirely to the lodgings of the officers of the establishment, to public offices, including clerks' chambers, board-room, &c. and, as has just been stated, to the accommodation of a certain number of captains, and light-horsemen. In both, the buildings are lower and less solid than those which surround

the principal square. But the general character is the same throughout. Brick walls, inlaid with a profusion of square windows, all of them deep seated, and carefully touched in the mouldings; free-stone finishings to each angle, gateways flanked by free-stone pillars, and a roof universally high and covered with grey shining slate, point to a period when, in the arrangement of such edifices, every approach to a classic model was in this country carefully eschewed.

Chelsea Hospital is, of course, designed to furnish an asylum for those members of the regular army alone, whom wounds, or sickness, or old age may have totally disabled. Its inmates are therefore, from the first to the last, invalids, that is to say, men affected by some infirmity or other; which though not visible to the eye of the common spectator is by the patient himself abundantly felt. Even in the "depths" of Chelsea Hospital, however, there is "a deeper still," so that out of the five hundred and fifty individuals that make up the weakness of the garrison, there are generally from sixty to one hundred cases of extreme

debility. For their reception an infirmary has been erected ; and he who is really anxious to behold the perfection of such establishments, cannot do better than seek for it here.

The infirmary, fitted up for the accommodation of eighty patients, is divided into two departments ; one of which, under charge of the physician, contains sufferers from such maladies as do not arise from external violence, while within the other the surgeon dresses old hurts, or deals, as he best can, with sores and recent injuries. Not that either physician or surgeon can do much to perfect the recovery of men whose constitutions long before they came under his care, were thoroughly broken down. But whatever can be effected by great kindness, by extreme attention, by a generous diet, by the unrestricted indulgence of every proper wish, to run life's sands out smoothly, and alleviate sufferings that the skill of man may not hope to remove, is here fully accomplished. To the honour of the country be it recorded, that no comfort of which his condition stands in need, is denied to the dying veteran. He inhabits a clean, and airy and spacious chamber. He has nurses to

wait upon him by day and night; fuel, food, drink, apparel, all are at his command, not only in abundance, but delicately. Tea, coffee, wine, brandy, fresh eggs, mutton, poultry, and the best home-baked bread, broths, fish, all that the sickly appetite can desire or the feverish imagination fancy, are administered; without one moment's unworthy reference to expense, though never in a spirit of extravagance. And if ever there existed a grateful set of men upon earth, among these poor fellows you will find them. Fretful they may sometimes be, when the fit of pain is upon them; impatient and unreasonable when sickness presses them sore. But no one has ever yet conversed with them in their hours of comparative ease, without receiving an impression every way favourable to their tempers as men, and to their feelings as Christians. On the whole, therefore, the infirmary of Chelsea Hospital may be truly pronounced the noblest portion of a noble institution: because in it not only are the bodily wants of a most deserving class of persons supplied to the uttermost, but sentiments are generated in their minds out of which it is impos-

sible to conceive that some improvement to their moral nature shall not arise. For the chaplain, not less than the physician and surgeon, is expected frequently to visit the infirmary. And he who writes these lines can testify, that nowhere are the visits of one, who comes with a message of peace, more thankfully received, or more gratefully acknowledged.

Speaking of the diet in the infirmary reminds me of that which is day by day issued out to the inmates of the wards. Though less diversified, of course, than that afforded to the sick, it is both abundant in quantity, and excellent in quality. A breakfast of cocoa and bread-and-butter—a dinner of mutton, or beef, with potatoes and vegetables in abundance, a pint and a-half of the best porter that London can produce, and an allowance of cheese, furnish each man with about forty-eight ounces of nutritious food daily; a proportion fully adequate to the necessities of the youngest and the most hard-working, and in this case greater than can sometimes be consumed. Yet would it be unkind to curtail the allowance; for there are comparatively few of these old men who have not a wife, or a child,

or near connexion of some sort, dependent on them ; and the fragments of their food which they are unable or unwilling to consume themselves they rarely omit to divide with their relatives.

As excellent care is thus taken to provide for the bodily wants of the pensioners, so are they not left without resources by an appeal to which they can at all times find both an agreeable and useful occupation for their minds. Chelsea Hospital can boast of its library,—the exclusive property of the pensioners,—which, if it contain neither a very extensive collection of books, nor any curious specimens either of manuscript or typography, serves all the purposes which it was ever meant to serve, and is tolerably well frequented. Except in the event of a severe illness, the pensioners are not usually permitted to carry books home to their own wards ; but a ticket from the chaplain gives to each who chooses to apply for it a right of admission to the library itself, where benches and tables are always prepared, and a cheerful fire kept burning. There, day after day, may be seen groups of students not unworthy of the pencil which has already, though under different circum-

stances, immortalised them, each storing his memory with the peculiar matters which most fall in with his tastes, and improving his moral being while he exercises his intellectual faculties. It is worthy of remark that the inmates of Chelsea Hospital are not, in general, devourers of mere trash. Sir Walter Scott's, and a few other novels, such as Captain Marryatt's, are always acceptable to them. But in the main their habits lead them to the perusal first, of works having a high religious tone and bearing, and next, of history, books of travels, voyages, and military narrative.

Another resource against *ennui*, as well as a means of restraining them from a too frequent recurrence to the public-house, was supplied not many years ago by the erection of a smoking-room—a detached apartment just inside the western gate, furnished with table, benches, and a stove. It has proved eminently useful,—and the introduction into it of cards and dominos, has not, as far as I can learn, brought with it any mischievous consequences. No doubt there is at all times some risk, lest men who idle an occasional hour away over bits of bone or paint-

ed pasteboard, should be tempted to play for stakes higher than their circumstances will authorise ; or that, losing their tempers, they may be hurried into the utterance of expressions which shall jar against the feelings of their neighbours, or still worse, lead to a violation of the third commandment ; but I do not find that any such results are produced here. On the contrary, a penny or two, at the utmost, occasionally changes hands, while rioting and brawling are strictly prohibited. Yet are these old men not without still purer and more effectual resources against *ennui* ; and it is very gratifying to me that I am in a condition to show, that they are indebted for it to the same noble lord who brought them and me into official communication with one another.

The hospital itself, properly so called, stands in the centre of a wide space of open grass land and gardens. In front of the pile lies a field, called Burton's-court, containing an area of about fourteen acres, separated from Green's-row and Smith-street by a lofty brick wall—from Franklin's-row by an iron railing. Laid down in grass, and formally, but not untaste-

fully planted with limes and horse-chestnuts, Burton's-court furnishes to the inmates of the pile a pleasant, because a retired, place of exercise. But the produce of the soil being appropriated to the governor, the soil itself cannot be converted to any other purpose than the rearing of a hay-crop in due season, and the pasturage of cattle afterwards. In like manner, the public kitchen-garden, from which both officers and men receive a slender supply of vegetables, is of necessity given up to the exclusive controul of the head gardener. So also the water-gardens, which, running down from the back of the building to the Thames, comprise a wide terrace, laid with luxuriant turf—two canals of stagnant water, a broad gravel walk passing with an arrow's straightness between them, and shaded on either hand by a row of pollarded limes, is resorted to exclusively by those among the officers to whom keys are entrusted. For the men, therefore, as their peculiar demesne, no space for many years existed. They might, indeed, wander round the gravel roads in Burton's-court, or sit upon the bench beneath the cloister in front of the chapel; but elsewhere

they were destitute of such conveniences as others within the establishment enjoyed. At last, in 1826, out of a legacy bequeathed to the hospital by Colonel Drouly, governor of Carisbroke Castle, who had himself risen from the ranks, a plot of land, lying to the south-east of the pile, where once the festivities of Ranelagh went forward, was, by order of the board of commissioners, purchased. The object of the commissioners, in effecting that purchase, was to hinder the growth of any nuisance such as might seriously interfere with the health or comforts of the inmates of the hospital. Yet the fact of employing the pensioners' money to accomplish that end, clearly established the right of the pensioners themselves to the property of the land so purchased. Was then, this right either disputed or set at nought? Nothing of the sort. The plot of ground lay, to be sure, from year to year, a perfect desert, producing spontaneously a scanty crop of sour grass, of which the money value, together with a trifling rent, which some neighbouring butcher paid for the privilege of turning in a few sheep, was carried to the account of the Drouly legacy. Yet

we cannot say now, after the results of a better experiment have developed themselves, that all was made of the field of which it was capable. It remained for Lord John Russell to convert a waste into a smiling garden, and by so doing, not only to enlarge the circle of the men's bodily comforts, but to contribute, in a high degree, to the amount of their innocent recreations.

The reader of Grose's *Military Antiquities* has not, probably, forgotten the terms of indignant sorrow in which the antiquary expresses himself, while noticing the gross abuses that prevailed during his day, in the distribution of the lesser patronage of Chelsea Hospital. "It is a melancholy consideration," writes he, "that among the many superannuated quartermasters, sergeant-majors, and sergeants in and about that hospital, none can be found worthy and able to fill up the inferior offices of the house. Were there any properly qualified to be found among them, it is not to be credited that these appointments would be bestowed on gentlemen's valet-de-chambres, or other discharged domestics, which is said to be some-

times the case ; as the persons who have the disposal of those places must well know how few rewards are in store for the inferior ranks of military men, particularly those above-mentioned ; and yet it is they who are in a great measure the nerves and sinews of our armies, who bear the brunt of the battle and fatigues of the day. To rob them of their right in this charity, is peculiarly cruel, as it is in part the produce of their own money. Several of the places, though of humble denomination and small nominal salary, would be considered by many married subalterns as a noble provision for themselves and families."

Such is the language made use of by one who wrote seventy years ago ; had he lived to the present day, he would have seen, that feelings in agreement with his own could operate in the breasts of those who having the power, had also the will to remedy the evil complained of. And this matter of the Ranelagh field being one clearly in point, it is just that I should put it in its proper light.

CHAPTER II.

*In which objects are described that tempt us
to moralise a little.*

THERE are some still living, though their numbers must, I should conceive, be inconsiderable, whose awakened recollections will doubtless carry them back to days when an evening at Ranelagh was accounted by the noblest and the fairest of England's sons and daughters, one of the most agreeable interludes in a life whether of business or of pleasure. In the middle of a field formally planted and laid out in shady walks and long straight avenues, stood the Rotunda, an edifice slightly constructed of brick and wood-work, spacious and not inelegant in its proportions, a sort of humble imitation in short of the Pantheon at Rome. Drawn round a stack of solid chimneys, which

formed a centre to the pile, and in some degree supported it, the Rotunda was distributed, internally, into two circles, both of them fitted up with boxes on either side of a broad avenue, and both exhibiting, at measured intervals, their orchestras for the accommodation of musicians: for music and dancing were the sports of the hour, of which the latter was pursued exclusively within an open space round which the inner circle ran, where, gazed at by crowds of well-dressed people of all ranks, the beau and belle of their day showed off their graceful figures in a minuet. Meanwhile, serenaded by a dozen bands, groups of pedestrians promenaded round and round each charmed ring, till the sound of a bell gave notice that some favourite singer was about to perform, or weariness, or the recognition of friends in one of the side-boxes, drew them away to some new and more agreeable occupation. Neither were such as preferred the cool airs of heaven to the heated atmosphere of the Rotunda, without their resources. From the branches of the trees that shaded every walk, festoons of coloured lamps hung down,

and beneath their canopy, bright eyes made answer to the tale which is seldom told with more effect than in the intervals of music and dancing.

Such was Ranelagh sixty years ago, towards which, when Belgrave Square, and the streets and buildings beyond it, had no existence, our grandfathers and grandmothers, then in the pride of youth and beauty, used night after night to betake themselves. The hour of assembly was from eight to nine o'clock; that of departure about eleven or twelve; while land and water alike furnished a highway to such as made "Pleasure's Temple" their point of attraction. They whose habits induced them to adhere to the solid earth, passed from Piccadilly, or St. James's Park, through open fields, and were set down, opposite to the Chelsea Bun-house, before a fine old Elizabethan mansion, of which not a fragment now remains. Through that noble lodge they were ushered into the scene of fairy revels; and there again, when weariness overtook them, they found their carriages waiting to convey them either to their own homes, or to some other resort of the

happy. Meanwhile the bosom of the Thames was covered with barges and wherries, all of them laden with the most distinguished fashionables of the day ; and all steering their course from Westminster-stairs, the ordinary point of embarkation, to a quay or landing-place below the Rotunda, to which an avenue of sycamores communicated. The avenue still remains, but both Rotunda and quay are gone, and with them habits of life, which, whether for good or for evil, brought the higher classes, more frequently than they come now, into contact, during their hours of relaxation and amusement, with the classes beneath them.

If I were a moralist, in the ordinary acceptation of the term, the impulse upon me would be irresistible, to edify my reader by drawing for him a contrast between the state of society as it now is, and what it was when Ranelagh existed in its glory. I believe, however, that he is the wisest man, who, instead of mourning over changes that come as surely as day follows night, makes up his mind to extract as much of good, and as little of evil, as he can from all that he sees and hears around him. At all events, I

am very certain, that society, whether improved or deteriorated, cannot be rolled back again to what it was sixty years ago ; and hence that to indulge in complaints because things are not exactly as a man might wish them to be, is far less profitable than the occupation of him who strives to adapt himself to things as they are. Not therefore by me shall the social habits of bygone generations be represented as tending more than our own to attach the several orders of men to one another ; though it is just possible that they who remember how strong was the tie that bound the old landlord to the old tenant, may, without any suggestions on my part, fall into this opinion. But this much I may venture to say, that the aristocracy of England do themselves grievous injustice, whenever, through the influence of fashion or any excess of refinement, or a too rigid adhesion to their own particular set, they shut themselves out entirely in their hours of relaxation, from the acquaintance of their inferiors. In this age, in particular, when there are so many willing, for the worst purposes, to stir up the hatred of the poor towards the rich, even the love of seclusion,

which in all cultivated minds is both strong and natural, ought to be resisted : for if they, who now take up their opinions from the writings of men to whom slander is an occupation because they hate the virtues which they will not imitate, could but witness the simplicity and gentleness which characterise the manners of the highest classes of English society, prejudices would, I am sure, be removed from their minds, which operate only to their own hurt, and to the injury of the whole social system. Nay more, though there may be, and doubtless are exceptions (and where such do occur they cannot be too rigidly marked), it will, I think, be found, that nowhere are the virtues which adorn domestic life more sedulously cultivated than in those very circles of which the humbler classes see nothing, but of which hearing only the most extravagant and unfounded calumnies, they entertain the worst opinion. Why should this be ? A very slight sacrifice of personal convenience, particularly in the country, would remove the evil. Is not the gain more than adequate to the loss ?

There is no denying that one effect of the political changes which we have lived to witness, many of us not without alarm, has already manifested itself, and will more and more continue to manifest itself in this : that upon the minds of men, both in public and private stations, are forced certain great truths, which, though they ought never to be forgotten, are apt somehow or other to slip out of view. The first is, that all men have a right to be treated at all times with courtesy and consideration ; the next, that both the cheapest and the most effectual means of establishing our own influence in society, is to deal with those among whom we may be thrown courteously and considerately. How ridiculously, in this respect, has the value of mere money been in our money-loving country overrated ? A kind word ; a gentle bearing ; an appearance of interest in the well being of those with whom he converses — how much farther are these seen to go in insuring for a great man the esteem of his inferiors, than even substantial favours, provided they be ungraciously bestowed ; and when the necessities of your case require you to make demands upon

the services of these inferiors, only feel that you stand towards them in the relation of a friend, and you need not hesitate to require at their hands a degree of self-devotion, such as no prospect of reward, either immediate or remote, would have induced them to exhibit. These are old truths, I am aware, never denied, yet scarcely acted up to as much as they might be in any circle; and grievously overlooked by that most odious of all odious classes, your sycophants and hangers-on, that attach themselves to every party in the state. But they are certainly beginning to be felt more extensively than, within the limits of my own experience, they once were; nor can we doubt, that the power which always brings good out of evil, will more and more diffuse the knowledge of them abroad.

Now, can any thinking man regret this? Surely not. He who can attain a great public good by practising a great private virtue, will surely not complain, when the only sacrifice required at his hands is, that he shall himself experience the luxury of knowing, that he has gladdened the hearts of others;

and as to society at large, its moral tone will undeniably be elevated in exact proportion to the success which attends our efforts to operate, for the general good, upon the best feelings of individuals, instead of by corrupting their principles and hardening their hearts.

You promised not to moralise—what are you doing now? True, true, good reader! I pray thee, bear with me, for it is not very easy to stand upon the ruins, even of the Rotunda, without looking farther than to the scene which immediately surrounds us; yet that is sufficiently attractive too.

I stated in the previous chapter, that on the decay of Ranelagh, a large portion of the ground which was formerly used as a place of public amusement, passed, by purchase, into the possession of the in-pensioners. For several years it lay waste; but a better spirit at length arose among the authorities to whom the care of the old men is entrusted, and a wall was built along its eastern border. Under the shelter of this, the old men henceforward found a pleasant walk, even when the wind blew cold and cutting, and for some years more

nothing farther was attempted. At last, Lord John Russell became paymaster-general, and in the exercise of the kindly feeling which distinguished all his dealings with the pensioners, he caused the Ranelagh field to be laid out, wherever there seemed to be sufficient depth of soil, into portions or lots, which the old men were permitted to occupy, each as his private garden. At the same time shrubs were planted, new gravel walks marked out, the rank grass mown and reduced to order, till in the end there came forth, what the visitor may behold now, one of the most picturesque and interesting specimens of gardening in the vicinity of London.

It was not, however, in order to please the eye alone, that these improvements were introduced. If there be a lack of anything within these walls, it is of some occupation, which, without subjecting the old men to a compulsory toil, shall yet excite their interest, and fill up what might otherwise become a blank in their existence. The idea that they would find this in their little garden-plats, suggested itself to the mind of Lord John Russell, and the event has in

all respects answered to the anticipation. Many an individual, who formerly, from sheer listlessness, would repair to a neighbouring alehouse, and waste his morning in such society as it afforded, finds now both society and employment in dressing his little plot of ground. And that their comforts might be complete, on the summit of a gentle mound that overlooks the cultivated patches, stands a summer-house, beneath the shadow of whose roof the veterans from time to time repose. There “in fighting their battles o’er again,” or discussing the news of the day, or comparing the results of their respective operations as gardeners, or, it may be, in still graver discourse, many an hour passes over them, not unprofitably either to mind or to body, seeing that the last is refreshed, and the first innocently amused, if it be not enlarged and elevated.

Ranelagh is exclusively the retreat of the men, the water-gardens the sacred resort of the officers, save only on the Sundays between the first of April and the first of October, when their privacy is, in my humble opinion, most unwisely invaded. Far be it from me to advocate

that mode of observing the Lord's day, which, while it cuts off the humbler classes from innocent recreation in the open air, drives too many of them to seek for amusement in the recesses of the gin-shop ; but I do not exactly see the wisdom, or the necessity, of disturbing on the Lord's day the quiet of Chelsea Hospital, by throwing open to the public, gardens by far too narrow in their dimensions to be more than an object of a moment's idle curiosity to the visitors. For the gardens of Chelsea Hospital are no more public gardens than those which attach to St. James's Palace ; and his Majesty would doubtless be astonished were his privacy to be broken in upon, regularly as Sunday came round, and himself and the members of his family excluded, by strangers, from the enjoyment of their own quiet walks behind the royal residence.

The water-gardens, if they merit observation at all, do so upon the ground that they offer the most perfect specimen of the old Dutch, or rather, French style of gardening, that is now to be met with in England. Existing in the precise state to which William the Third brought

them, they have their straight broad walk, their rows of pollards, their grass plats closely shaven, their canals, and their terrace, which stretches, under the shade of some lordly planes, along the bank of the Thames. The general effect is, however, striking, especially to him who, standing at the bottom of the long avenue, gazes upwards through the vista upon the hospital itself. But, having observed that, and cast a rapid glance over Chelsea Reach towards the Surrey hills—having noticed how picturesquely the old wooden bridge at Battersea is displayed against the horizon, and remarked upon the crowds of boats, barges, and sailing-vessels which pass and repass you every minute, your work of examination is done; and you may retrace your steps without fearing that any material object has been passed by, in your search after the curious and the recondite.

CHAPTER III.

In which we deal with both the living and the dead.

I AM not without apprehension, courteous reader, that in thus plunging you, abruptly, *in medias res*, I may appear to have dealt, as well towards you as towards the subject under consideration, with much less of ceremony than both had a right to expect. You have been told, for example, that Chelsea Hospital contains so many quadrangles, and that there are certain pleasure-grounds and gardens annexed, without having been made aware of the important fact that both to building and gardens there are means of ingress. Nay, to the very place of sepulture I had well nigh conducted you, describing it, as I have done other places, in detail, but that its position, close to the eastern gate, reminded me that some notice ought long

ago to have been taken of the gates themselves. In few words, then, these are in number three, of which those at the extremities conduct into the flanking squares, while the central, or royal gate, leads from Green's-row into Burton's-court, and thence, by a straight avenue, directly to the vestibule which separates the dining-hall from the chapel. The royal gate, a handsome iron grating, flanked on either side by well-executed trophies, and supported by lodges, is never used except on occasions of state; the eastern and western approaches are always kept open. Be it your part, under my imaginary guidance, to enter the hospital from the east, sometime about half-past ten o'clock, on a fine, clear, sunny morning in May. In order to reach your point thus early, you must, of course, breakfast betimes, and traverse St. James's-park, Queen's-row, Ebury-street, and the scene of Wilkie's picture. But the chances are, that you will have no cause to regret this, more especially if your visit of inspection be paid on a Wednesday or a Friday. It rarely happens that, out of a body of five hundred invalids, one or two are not committed every week

to the dust ; and Wednesday and Friday being here the canonical days for interments, you may chance to be present at the ceremony. Let me, then, assume that we have traversed the intermediate space together, and are standing at this moment at the extremity of Jew's-row, though prepared, by the simple operation of throwing our right shoulders forward, to make good our entrance into the hospital. See, there is some operation in progress more important than usual. The gates are closed, the guard is turned out, and the sentry holds the postern in his hand, that he may admit well-dressed and respectable-looking people, at the same time that he shuts out the mob. Examine the bearing of these men closely, and having done so, retain the indifference which on ordinary occasions may pervade you, if you can. There are just twelve of them, with a sergeant and a corporal, of whom three, including the sergeant, have severally lost a leg ; two present each an empty sleeve ; and the remainder are furrowed over by age, and heavily laden with infirmities. Yet, how erect and steady is their port ! There they are, with the three-cornered

hat of William the Third's day, surmounting the red frock of a similar date—noble specimens of what soldiers once were, gallant ruins of men who never knew in youth what fear was, and are not now likely to forget what is due to their well-earned reputation. And observe the sentry at the gate;—how good-humouredly he repulses the crowd, chiefly of boys, that press upon him, though his sole weapon be now the staff, which is used indifferently to command attention, and to support the steps of him who wields it. But, as I have just said, he has no orders to exclude well-dressed people, and will not, therefore, resist our effort to establish ourselves within the barricade, if such be your desire. Move forward then, and place yourself just beyond the guard-house, till the procession, of which the approach is announced by the roll of the muffled drum, and the shrill notes of the fife, shall have passed. We can then fall in with the rear, and be witnesses to the ceremonies, whatever they may be, that attend the funeral of a pensioner.

The drum will have been heard some time, and the well-known air, the 149th psalm, re-

cognised, ere the procession comes in sight, winding round the angle of the court. It appears, however, at last, headed by the firing party, twelve veterans, accoutred for the occasion in old black waist-belts, from which, in the rear, depend old bayonets, and to which, in front, are fastened old cartouche-boxes. Their muskets, somewhat the worse for wear, and stripped of the slings which formerly attached to them, are reversed, not perhaps with the nicety which a firing party from the Grenadier Guards might display, but after a fashion which sufficiently indicates that the old men have not forgotten the lessons learned in early youth. The tread of the men themselves, likewise, is orderly ; and they are commanded by a sergeant, who marches behind the rearmost file, with his partisan or halbert reversed. Next to the firing party move the drummer and fifer, two feeble grey-headed men, in whom it would be difficult to recognise the relics of the light-hearted lads whose merry music has startled many a maiden from her broken slumbers, and called her to the window that she might look her last at some favourite partner in the dance, or, it may be,

at one who had established still stronger claims upon her memory. And now come the chaplain and his clerk, of whom it would be unbecoming in me to say more than that both have seen some service, and that both carry about in their own persons sensible proofs that where there is service there is usually danger. These, again, are succeeded by the coffin, which, being covered with a black pall, and surmounted by the hat of the deceased,—the single military trophy of which his latter days could boast,—is borne on the shoulders of six of his comrades. His relatives, if he have any, now fall into their places; the nurses who attended him in his last illness succeed, and the whole procession is closed by the inmates of his ward, among whom it rarely occurs that he had not one or more intimate and familiar friends.

As the closing files pass the grave-yard doorway, we attach ourselves to the little column, and are introduced into an open area, oblong in shape, totally devoid of ornament, and fenced about with lofty brick-built walls. Not yet, however, have we leisure to look round; for the procession having advanced about half-

way towards its further extremity, defiles somewhat to the right, and halts beside a mound of fresh earth. Here, at the foot of the grave, the clergyman takes his station; while the firing party form line along its edge, leaving, however, space enough between for those whose business it may be to lower the coffin into the dust. Meanwhile the mourners, including nurses and pensioners, in attendance, arrange themselves in a sort of half circle about the grave. And now the chaplain, raising his hat, begins the service, during the progress of which you cannot better employ yourself than by looking round upon the countenances of his audience. Of levity during the performance of any portion of divine service, I have never among soldiers observed a tittle. On the contrary, their manner is always subdued and respectful—such as becomes men who are not unaware that with them “life is indeed in the midst of death.” Yet striking as the deportment of young soldiers may be, even in situations similar to this, it is not only different from that of the veterans now beside us, but it is a thousand times less impressive. Examine

the countenances of these men minutely ; and, as they stand uncovered, there is ample opportunity of doing so. Theirs is not the expression of men who fear to die ; but it indicates that each is at this moment taking a hurried survey of the numerous escapes and deliverances which he may have personally experienced ; or else that he is calculating the probable duration of the period that shall intervene ere the same service shall be read over his own mortal remains, with which the remains of his comrade are now committed to the earth. Hence reverence, fortitude, and resignation, are strongly depicted in every line, not unmixed with the higher and holier sense of religious assurance, and a lively Christian faith. For there can be no greater mistake than to suppose that the old soldier, as we find him at least in Chelsea Hospital, is an irreligious man. Thoughtless he may have been, and wayward—perhaps profligate and vicious in his youth—but now that life has fallen with him “into the sear and yellow leaf,” he has learned to seek in religion—that kind of religion which teaches us to be grateful for mercies already received, and to

look forward not without hope to still greater mercies hereafter — such consolations and refreshments as this world can neither give nor take away. Therefore, not with the indifference which often marks the manner of those, whose career has been less exposed than his own to difficulties and temptations, does the old soldier listen to the short and beautiful service which our church has appointed to be read at the burial of the dead. On the contrary, he *feels* where common men scarcely *hear*; and from his soul comes the Amen which answers to the touching petition, in which “we meekly beseech our Father to raise us from the death of sin to the life of righteousness; so that when we shall depart this life we may rest in Him, as our hope is this our brother doth.”

But the service is not of long continuance. The chaplain has ceased to speak. The coffin is lowered into the grave, earth is consigned to earth, dust to dust, ashes to ashes. And now the sergeant, taking a pace to the front, gives the word of command, and his party come to attention, shoulder their arms, and present.

Their volley may be less exact than it used to be — but no matter. It tells the neighbourhood that a gallant spirit has gone back to Him who gave it ; after which the men half-cock their firelocks, face to the left, and the yard is soon emptied.

There is not much in the grave-yard of Chelsea Hospital, which is likely to arrest or rivet the attention of a stranger. Like most other places of sepulture in and around London, there hangs over it an air of gloom and desolation. For though it be so far decently kept, that neither weeds nor rank grass are allowed to overrun its surface, in every thing that could by possibility be construed into an attempt at decoration it is wanting. Nor, indeed, does it appear till very recently ever to have fallen in with the fantasies of Englishmen to beautify or adorn the receptacles for their dead. In almost all the countries on the Continent, we find the burying-places neatly planted and laid out ; and in some parts of Wales, a similar taste prevails : but in England, if from time to time the nettle-crops be shorn down, and the mounds restored which the feet

either of children or of sheep may have defaced, as much is done as anybody seems to consider desirable. For no human being visits the grave of his fathers, or his children, except as a matter of duty or of necessity, and the graveyards are in consequence left desolate, as if they were taboo'd. On the other hand, there is a strange propensity among us, to crowd into these gloomy spaces a multitude of unshapely monuments, flat stones planted perpendicularly in the earth, and engraved with the names and ages of the deceased. Of these, in the dormitory of Chelsea Hospital, there is not an extravagant display. A few, planted chiefly towards the western extremity, mark the spots where officers, or civilians, or their wives or little ones repose ; but the tombs of the poor pensioners are almost all nameless. Still, here and there we do meet with a tablet which tells the passer by that a brave man sleeps beneath, and of one of these, as somewhat remarkable in its way, I copy the inscription.

Here rests William Hiseland,
 Who merited well a pension
 If long service be a merit,

Having served upwards of the days of man.

Ancient but not superannuated,

Engaged in a series of wars,

Civil as well as foreign ;

Yet not maimed or worn out by neither ;

His complexion was florid and fresh,

His health hale and hearty ;

His memory exact and ready :

In stature he excelled the military size ;

In strength surpassed the prime of youth ;

And what made his age still more patriarchal,

When above one hundred years old,

He took unto him a wife.

Read, fellow soldiers, and reflect

That there is a spiritual warfare

As well as a warfare temporal.

Born VI of August 1620. }

Died VII of Feb. 1732. }

Aged 112.

I have made many anxious inquiries about this veteran, but it grieves me to be compelled to acknowledge, that they have produced no satisfactory results. All that is known of his history stands recorded on his tombstone ; and as I have given the scroll at length, my reader must be content to weave out of it for himself, whatever tissue of striking or romantic events his fertile imagination may represent as most appropriate.

CHAPTER IV.

In which the hospital is further described, and some of its arrangements noticed.

THERE are but three points more towards which it will be necessary to direct my reader's attention, previous to a personal introduction into the society of the in-pensioners themselves. Of the Board-room, an apartment in which the commissioners hold their sittings, and the invalided soldier receives his discharge, I need say very little. It is a commodious and comfortable saloon, which, besides affording accommodation to this court of honour, witnesses twice a year the festivities of the inmates of the place, where, on the founder's day, and the anniversary of the reigning monarch's birth, they dine together. The ceremony of discharging a disabled soldier is, moreover,

abundantly simple. Previous to his removal to Chelsea, he has undergone an examination by the medical officers of his regiment, and of the invalid dépôt at Chatham; which is repeated, though of course more summarily, before the surgeons of the hospital; and fortified by their report, as well as armed with his discharge and certificate of service, he presents himself in the presence of the commissioners to claim a pension. The amount of this is determined, with reference to the period, more or less prolonged, of the individual's service, or the extent of his disability. Formerly a good deal more of discretion was vested in the commissioners than they can now exercise; and I have never heard that they abused it. But within these last few years, the cry of economy has so far prevailed, that new regulations affecting the rates of pension have been issued; the effect of which is very seriously to diminish the amount of retirement allowed to soldiers who shall have enlisted subsequently to a stated period. Nobody who considers this will doubt for a moment, that the government of the country is disposed to practise a rigid economy; but

how far such economy is consistent with the idea of enticing into the ranks an order of men superior to that by which they are mainly filled up, is a point for those who advocate both principles to determine. Every soldier, be it observed, brings with him a character from his commanding officer, and as a proof that those who thus claim from their country a means of moderate subsistence in their old age can sometimes show that they have earned it, the following cases are subjoined of the sort of history which such documents occasionally elucidate.

Angus Ross, Sergeant Major, 79th regiment:

Served 34 years and 5 months, of which 3 years in Portugal and Spain, 3 years and 5 months in Flanders and France; was present at the battles of Salamanca, Pyrenees, Nivelle, Nive, Toulouse, Quatre Bras, and Waterloo; was wounded in the left cheek and right leg at Waterloo slightly; distinguished himself at the battle of Waterloo by voluntarily proceeding in search of, and procuring a waggon-load of musket-ball cartridges, for that part of the line occupied by the 79th Highlanders, when the ammunition carried in the men's pouches was by the whole nearly, and by many individuals totally expended, after several attempts having been made by

others without success.—*Character*: a most *excellent* and *efficient* soldier, seldom in hospital, trustworthy and sober.

John Jones, Colour-Sergeant, 48th regiment:

Served 31 years and 1 month, of which 3 years in Portugal, Spain, and France, 4 years and 8 months in New South Wales, 10 years and 10 months in India; was present at the sieges of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajos, and the battles of Salamanca, Vittoria, Pyrenees, Nivelle, Orthes, and Toulouse; also at the taking of the Coong country, East Indies.—*Character*: unexceptionable.

Robert M'Kay, Sergeant Major, Grenadier Guards.

Served 32 years and 2 months, of which in Walcheren 1809, Holland and Belgium 1814; five times under the enemy's fire during that time: was at the battle of Waterloo, where he was wounded. In Portugal 1827 and 1828; saved the life of private H. Warrington when bathing in the river Tagus, 1828.—*Character*: most exemplary and meritorious.

William Flintham, Colour-Sergeant, Rifle Brigade.

Served 23 years and 4 months. Served in France, North America, Malta, Pyrenees, Bayonne, Orthes, Tarbes, Toulouse, and at the siege of New Orleans.—*Character*: good, gallant, excellent, trustworthy, and sober.

From the Board-room we proceed to the Hall and Chapel, noble apartments of their kind, and eminently illustrative of the consummate

skill of the architect in managing his proportions. They measure, respectively, one hundred and ten feet in length, thirty in width, and differ in their general arrangements only so far as the uses to which they are severally applied, seem to require.

The hall is an exact parallelogram, with plain plastered walls, and a floor covered with free-stone. The roof is flat. There is a dais or slight elevation at one end, and a gallery, I believe for musicians, at the other ; and, day and night, tables stand covered, as if all the inhabitants of the pile took here their refectations ; but the practice of dining together has long died out. Among the officers it ceased in 1796, among the men some years previously ; and now, while the former live at home in the bosom of their own families, the latter receive their messes at a sort of buttery-hatch at the head of the hall, and bear them away to their respective wards. There they are portioned out to individuals, so that each has it in his power, if he be so disposed, to share his provisions with those to whom Nature has given the strongest claims upon his affections.

The hall, though plain, and so far strictly in character with its supposed uses, is not without its ornaments. Over the high table, and occupying the whole length of the western face, is a painting, designed and begun by Verrio, though finished by Henry Cook, which represents Charles the Second on horseback, surrounded by groups of heathen gods, with a distant view of Chelsea Hospital in the background. The painting, which was the gift of one of the Earls of Ranelagh, contains the following inscription on the frame :

“Carolo Secundo, Regi optimo, hujus Hospitii
foundatori, dominoque suo clementissimo, Ri-
cardus Jones, Comes de Ranelagh, posuit.”

The likeness to Charles is striking ; but the value of the painting, as a work of art, cannot be estimated very highly.

Far more appropriate, however, and far more attractive are those decorations of the hall, for which Chelsea Hospital stands indebted to the wise policy and good taste of His present Majesty. My readers are probably aware that the flags and other trophies, captured from the enemy in war, have heretofore been conveyed

to the Cathedral of St. Paul's, there to rot and waste away, unvalued by the body to whose keeping they were intrusted, and unseen by all the world besides. To such a height, indeed, was this indifference to the monuments of England's former glories carried, that out of the many flags taken by Marlborough, only three or four shreds survive, the streamers of the rest having mouldered away in some damp recess, while the staves were used by the vergers as poles wherewith to hunt rats and other vermin out of the vestry-rooms. William the Fourth, not unaware of the great moral lesson which the display of such trophies is calculated to teach, as well to the young soldier as to the old, caused the wrecks not long ago to be rescued from their hiding-places, and committed to the charge of his veterans for ever, as the legitimate representatives of those whose valour won them. Accordingly there are suspended round the hall the ensigns of Regal and Republican France, of Spain, Holland, and other European nations; besides many for which the establishment stands indebted to the liberality of the Honourable the

Court of Directors, whom their sovereign's example induced to send hither trophies of our achievements in the East. These occupy, in a double row, the spaces that intervene between the windows, while in front of the music-gallery, elevated above a bundle of spear-handles, waves the union jack.

From the hall to the chapel the visitor passes across a noble vestibule lighted from above by a cupola, and which, besides serving as a communication to both apartments, constitutes the principal entrance into the Hospital itself. He then ascends a flight of steps which conduct him to the chapel door; and I am greatly deceived, if the effect produced upon him, when, passing the threshold, he finds himself in the house of prayer, be not such as to set his previous calculations at nought. Let me, however, recommend to such as are desirous of seeing this part of the Hospital to advantage, to pay their first visit on a Sunday morning, during the performance of divine worship. The benches which occupy the body of the place are then crowded with old soldiers; whose grave, but not austere countenances, lighted

up from time to time by a display of deep devotional feeling, seem to me to present to the eye of a painter, subjects too inviting to be overlooked. How decent, how much more than decent, is the deportment of these worn-out warriors ! how humble their attitude in prayer ; how keen and animated their attention during the delivery of a discourse, which, if it strike but the right chord, is seen not unfrequently to move them even to tears. And yet there are those who have spoken of the soldier, both in his youth and in his old age, as of a being inferior in all the qualities that dignify and adorn the man, to his countrymen of more peaceful occupations. It was a base calumny which pronounced, that “ the greater the rogue, the better is he fitted for the ranks of the British army ;” and he who doubts that it was so, need only take his station where the reader is supposed to be standing now, in order to be satisfied.

By its general form, as well as in its dimensions, the Chapel of Chelsea Hospital accords well with the hall. There are, however, these trifling differences in their details : that

whereas the roof of the hall is flat, in the chapel the ceiling is slightly arched—while the exact parallelogram which holds good in the structure of the former, is in the latter spoiled by a curve or bend in the eastern wall, within which stands the altar. So also in reference to the fitting up of the two apartments, no point of similitude can be traced between them. In the chapel the walls are panelled with Dutch oak, elegantly, though not richly carved. The ceiling too has a good deal of carved work about it, and the organ-loft and altar-rails are both of oak, and both marked by the carver's hand. Over the altar, likewise, is a fresco-painting, one of the two that are to be found in England, which represents the Resurrection, as that awful scene is described in the twenty-eighth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel. It is the production of Sebastian Ricci, and has been pronounced not destitute of merit. In other respects the resemblance between this chapel and that of one of the colleges in Oxford or Cambridge is very striking. While benches, now happily supplied with backs, are set for the men in the

centre of the aisle; along the sides are pews for the officers; the governor and lieutenant-governor occupying each a series of stalls beneath the organ-loft.

I have elsewhere explained, that for its massive communion-plate, not less than for certain illustrated vellum prayer-books printed in black letter, Chelsea Hospital is indebted to the liberality of James the Second. By William the Fourth, gorgeous coverings for the altar, desk, and pulpit, were on his accession presented. These are exceedingly beautiful, yet by the pensioners, though they esteem them highly, they are held in far less value than other decorations that hang round the chapel. I allude to the profusion of banners, richer, more varied, and grouped with even purer taste, than those which ornament the walls of the dining-hall. In the chapel are deposited the standards of Tippoo Saib, the whole of the eagles, thirteen in number, that were wrested from Napoleon's legions, flags taken from the Americans, from the French, from the Prussians, from the Spaniards, from the Rajah of Bhurtpore, from the king of Ava, from every power, in short,

with which, in every quarter of the world, during the last half-century, England has been at war. I cannot pretend to describe the effect produced by the display of these banners, as they wave over the heads of the very men whose personal exertions contributed to acquire them; nor account for the half triumphant, half mournful glance, which from time to time the veteran turns towards them, in the intervals of prayer, or it may be while prayer is going forward. But if they speak to him of the vanity of earthly renown, if they carry back his thoughts to other years, and cause him to institute a comparison between what he himself was then, and what he is now, they will convey to the grey-headed warrior moral instruction more salutary than he can gather from any other source except his Bible. Nor will the young soldier who chances to visit the asylum within which, after years of service, he looks forward to find a home, fail to derive, from what he sees around him, a powerful incitement to good conduct. Beholding how the veteran is honoured, and perceiving that similar respect is to be acquired

only by similar achievements, he, too, will learn to put a control upon himself, — inasmuch as the old men will tell him that such trophies can only be won by men, who are not more brave in the field than orderly in their quarters, not more eager to meet the enemy than patient under the hardships and privations which open out the road to battle and to victory.

I have now done with my descriptions, and probably my reader will scarce desire that it should be otherwise. I must not conclude, however, without stating, that as Chelsea Hospital takes rank as a royal garrison, a guard is every day mounted; that in former years the old men used to carry arms; but that of late they have been relieved from the incumbrance of weapons, which in general they are too much debilitated to wield. Moreover, it is but an act of justice to those in authority to state, that in points of greater importance than the appropriation of Ranelagh field to the uses of the pensioners, Chelsea Hospital is now delivered from the reproach which in other years was cast upon it. The fashion of appointing

cast-off valets, and persons of even more equivocal claims, to situations in the Hospital, has for ever passed away. Soldiers, or men who have been soldiers, are sought out and put into every situation for which they are qualified; and the time will, I trust, yet arrive, when by soldiers, or by men who have served in the army, the Hospital shall in all its departments be peopled. Neither have the meritorious class of half-pay officers been entirely forgotten in recent changes. Lord John Russell has the merit of having been the first to attach three half-pay captains, and as many subalterns, to the strength of the Hospital, to whom apartments are awarded, with a supply of coals and candles, and a slight addition, in each case, to the amount of half-pay. I fear, indeed, that in settling the value of these allowances, due consideration was not paid to the high price of every necessary of life in the immediate vicinity of the metropolis; and I know that the result has in almost every instance been, that the party nominated to the office has been disappointed. But the intention was humane and considerate; and now that

the first step is taken, no human being would venture to raise his voice against a second, even if it carried the paymaster-general into the extravagance of somewhat bettering the invalid's condition.

BOOK IV.

CONTAINING MATTER PRINCIPALLY OF

ORAL TRADITION.

ORAL TRADITION.

CHAPTER I.

*In which the Reader listens to a Conference touching
the Punishment of Death.*

WE have now taken a general survey of the Hospital ; and will, if you please, gentle reader, retrace our steps into Ranelagh, where, under the shelter of their own little rustic temple, we shall probably find a group of old warriors enjoying the balmy air of this fine summer's morning. How fortunate we are — there they sit, a dozen of noble fellows, perfect specimens of what the good old soldier ought to be : keenly and sensitively alive to the honour of their profession ; yet inclined neither to conceal their own errors, nor to palliate those of others. Come, you may take your seat among them with an easy mind. They have seen too much of the world, and held familiar intercourse with

too many of their fellow-men, to be at all disturbed by our presence ; and as to their conversation, depend upon it if you fail to be interested in that, the fault will be yours, not theirs. Are you apt to be incommoded by the smell of tobacco ? No ? That is well ; for a soldier cannot repeat his story, with any degree of effect, if you rob him of his pipe. But take him in the midst of his smoking, and let him speak in his own way, and the mind must be strangely constituted indeed, which his eloquence has no power to control.

“ You were talking of the recent motion for the abolition of corporal punishment, captain. What is your opinion upon that subject ? Could the army be managed without corporal punishment ? and are those the soldier’s best friends, who clamour for its abolition ? ”

“ Why, sir, if you ask me whether the army could be managed without corporal punishment at all, I will answer without hesitation, that it could not. I admit that in my young days, the heaviest punishments were too promiscuously awarded. Men have been flogged for crimes which would have been sufficiently

recompensed by a week's drill; and even death itself was here and there inflicted, when something less might have served the purpose. But now you are going all to the opposite extreme. We read in the newspapers every day, of men absenting themselves from quarters, knocking down non-commissioned officers, and committing all sorts of atrocities, and they are confined for it to barracks, or sent to the treadmill among common thieves and vagabonds. Is this the way to keep up the discipline and spirit of the army? No, no, sir. The good man has no cause now, he never had much, to dread punishment at all. The bad man deserves punishment; and that is the best which comes most summarily, and is strictly confined to him who has earned it. I say then, retain the power to punish corporally, however sparing you may be to exercise it; for it is not only the most effectual in reference to the guilty, but it imposes the least degree of hardship upon the innocent."

"How do you make that out, friend?"

"Why thus, to be sure. A man strikes his sergeant or corporal on guard, or, it may be,

forces a sentry. In former times you would have tried that man by a regimental court-martial, and punished him; and in the course of a week afterwards he would have been in his place again, and doing his duty. Now you must report him at head-quarters, keep him in confinement till a garrison or district court-martial is assembled, and when all is done, you send him for three months to the tread-mill. Don't you see, first, that his going to the tread-mill operates nothing as an example, because nobody sees it? and next, that for three or four months the good men of the regiment have extra duty to perform, because a bad man is absent. Now, I am no advocate for too free an appeal to the lash. Our best officers have always been the most sparing to use it; but this I do say, that if you carry your foolish notions much further than they go at present, you will soon have your army in such a state, that the sooner it is disbanded altogether, the better."

"Well, friend, I am not going to contend with you upon this much hacknied subject. I perceive, indeed, that your opinions coin-

cide exactly with those of your great chief; and though his grace's judgment seldom needs the support of any other men's opinions, I think that yours is in this case of incalculable value even to him. But I did not come here to argue abstract questions. You said just now, that in your younger days the punishment even of death was at times hastily inflicted. Have any instances of the kind ever chanced to come under your own observation?"

"I will not say that I ever knew a case in which a man was executed for an offence that had not been pronounced capital by the articles of war. But I have known instances in which the extreme mismanagement of those in authority seemed to me to drive poor fellows on to the commission of such offences. I admit, sir, that such were of very rare occurrence; and I have had some experience too, for I served his Majesty in almost every country under heaven, a full quarter of a century. But one cannot forget these things when they do happen. Somehow or other they make an impression on the memory, which no lapse of time can

efface ; and an event of the kind, at which I was present, is just as much before my eyes at this moment, as it was twenty years ago."

" You would oblige me,—I think I may add you would oblige us all, very much, by describing it."

The old man smokes for a minute or two with increased energy, as if the clouds which he scattered around left his brain the more clear, and is profoundly silent. All eyes are, however, bent upon him ; and we collect from their expression that such is his custom when he is about to spin a yarn. Neither are we deceived. He has finished his pipe ; he knocks out the ashes, he lays it down beside him on the bench, and thus begins.

" Well then, I'll tell you what happened in a regiment that was once brigaded with ours, and to an officer who afterwards became one of the most distinguished in the British army. You will excuse me if I don't give you the colonel's name, nor yet the number of the regiment ; but if there be any here who served in Sicily in 1807, they will perfectly understand me ; and as to the rest, I don't see why I

should enlighten their ignorance at the expense, perhaps, of casting an unmerited stain on a brave and good man's reputation.

“ In the regiment to which I belonged there was a man called Tims, a good soldier, and a sober, quiet and inoffensive man when not provoked, but singularly obstinate in adhering to his resolutions when he once formed them. For some cause or other he took it into his head to grow tired of his old corps, and made application to be received as a volunteer into the ———— regiment. I must inform you, indeed, that the discipline in our regiment was very severe. We had at our head a gentleman, who sat in parliament for ————shire, and who seemed to put a much higher value on his dignity as a member of the House of Commons, than as the commandant of one of the finest battalions in his Majesty's service. There is no accounting for taste, neither would it have signified to us the value of an old tobacco-pipe, had not the general of our brigade chanced to take a totally different view of the subject. But the consequence of their difference was, that the men of the ———— were liable

to perpetual annoyances,—the general tormenting us in order to punish our commanding officer, and the colonel punishing right and left as often as he got angry with the general. If I recollect right, it was this that produced a feeling in Tims's mind, such as he could not overcome. He had been himself reduced from the rank of sergeant ; he had been repeatedly sent to drill ; and more than all, had witnessed the degradation and punishment of men whom he loved and respected ; and nothing would serve him but to get out of the regiment, by a fair exchange if such could be effected, if not by desertion.

“ His wish was at last accomplished. In the ————— there was a youth who had a brother in ours, to whom he was very desirous of being united, and the two colonels making no objection, we got the recruit, and Tims went to the —————. He carried with him the esteem and respect of all his comrades ; and as the two corps chanced to be quartered together, we saw almost as much of him after he had changed his facings, as while he continued a member of our own light company.

“Col. ——, of the ——, was then accounted a very strict officer. He became, I believe, afterwards in every thing the soldier’s friend; and I don’t mean to say that even then his motives were faulty. But he entertained the idea, happily now exploded throughout the army, that the only way to preserve discipline in a regiment is to govern with extreme severity. Among other schemes which he adopted to keep the men sober was this. In Sicily we had an allowance of wine daily — a pint for each man, and it was sufficient. Of course the drunkards did not think so, and wine being very cheap in that country, every man that felt disposed to get himself and his comrades into trouble, possessed abundant opportunities of doing so. Colonel ——, in order to put a stop to this, issued an order, that as often as a man should be found drunk when warned for parade or duty, not only his wine but the wine of the whole company should be stopped. It was a rash, and I must add, an unjust regulation, which while it punished the innocent, served in no degree to restrain or reform the guilty; for the soldier who can so far disgrace

himself as to come drunk for duty, is not the sort of person to be acted upon by any regard for the feelings or comforts of his comrades. Nevertheless, the system was persevered in with the utmost rigour, and it led to the following result.

“ In the same company with Tims, who soon rose by his good behaviour to the rank of corporal, was a man called Smith ; one of those determined rascals with whom there is no dealing ; a fellow who earned a flogging regularly once a month, and was seldom more than a week at a time out of hospital. If he saw the gallows before him, and was assured that he should hang for it the next hour, Smith could not have kept himself sober, provided wine or spirits were within his reach ; and the consequence was that the men of his company suffered on his account so much, that their patience could scarce hold out. It chanced on a certain occasion, after Smith had been, as usual, about a week returned to his duty, that he appeared drunk at guard-mounting. There was no hiding the circumstance, neither indeed

did the man deserve to be screened ; so he was ordered to the rear, stripped of his arms and accoutrements, and sent to the guard-house. Tims was likewise on guard, and went to his post with a sad countenance, which, as his fellow-soldiers afterwards remarked, grew more and more gloomy in proportion as the hour for relief came round. At last he was relieved, and with the men of his company, who had taken the same tour of duty, he returned to his barrack-room. Not long afterwards the regiment was ordered under arms to witness a punishment. Smith had been tried as soon as he became sober, found guilty, and sentenced to a flogging ; and the parade was formed in order that the award of the court might as promptly as possible be carried into execution.

“The regiment was drawn up in three sides of a square ; the prisoner was marched forward ; the proceedings of the court-martial were read aloud ; and the colonel declared his determination not to abate one lash. Something, moreover, seemed to have ruffled him that day ; for before he commanded the prisoner to strip, he desired

Corporal Tims to step forward, and began to blame him severely, in the hearing of the whole parade, for Smith's misconduct.

‘You are the corporal of his squad, sir,’ said he, ‘and I hold you responsible for his behaviour, as well as for that of the squad in general ; indeed, if I served you right, I should reduce you to the ranks for neglect of duty ; but I will not go so far this time. Only mark my words, and let all the non-commissioned officers of the regiment observe them also : I am determined to put a stop to drunkenness ; and if they will not assist me of their own accord, I will try whether I cannot devise some means of compelling their assistance. You may go back to the ranks, sir. Your wine, and the wine of the whole company, is stopped for a month.’

‘This is very hard, colonel,’ replied Tims, saluting his commanding officer with great respect. ‘’Tis very hard both upon me and the rest of us. Our wine has been stopped these five months for that one man. What can we do with him ?’

‘Do!’ cried the colonel in a passion. ‘Shoot him if you will. I don’t care what you do, so that you keep him from disgracing me and the whole regiment.’

‘Very well, sir,’ answered Tims; and then turning round he cried aloud, ‘Comrades! you hear what the colonel has said. I will do you one service, at all events. For myself, I don’t care what the consequences may be, but you shall never again be harassed to death for such a thing as this.’

“There was a profound silence on the parade, so that Tims’s voice was heard throughout as distinctly as a bell is heard at midnight. Neither did anybody make the least attempt to interrupt him, when, turning away from the colonel, he placed himself close to Smith, in such a direction as left in the prisoner’s rear a space perfectly open. I cannot tell whether we were surprised at the movement, for the whole thing passed in shorter time than I have taken to describe it, though now my impression is that my own mind, at least, misgave me. But the result could not have been anti-

cipated by any one. It was this : Tims clapped the muzzle of his firelock to Smith's temple, and shot him dead on the spot.

‘Now,’ exclaimed he, casting away his weapon, ‘take me, and do with me what you will. My life has been a burthen to me these six months past ; and if by making it the sacrifice I can obtain better treatment for the regiment, I shall think it well bestowed.’

“I cannot venture to describe the effect that was produced on the minds of all who witnessed the deed. Its consequences to poor Tims were inevitable. He was disarmed, ironed, put into the black hole, tried, and condemned to be hanged—a sentence which was carried into execution soon afterwards. So universal, however, was the regret experienced for his fate, and so high the esteem in which his comrades held him, that, the very night after, the men both of the ———— and ———— regiments stole out of their quarters after roll-call, and tore down the gibbet. But that was not all : Colonel ———, as I have already said, a just and kind-hearted man by nature, was so deeply affected by the occurrence, that from that hour

he changed his system of managing his regiment. Lax and remiss he never became, but he always tempered justice with mercy; and he found, as officers invariably do, who possess good sense enough to draw the line properly, that there is at least as much to be done with the men by kindness judiciously applied, as by severity.—That is my story; now tell me one in return; for I have nothing more to say.”

There was a silence of some minutes' duration after the captain ceased to speak, and his comrades looked as men are apt to do when such a tale has been repeated in their hearing.

“Your's is a melancholy yarn, Dan,” at length observed a one-armed corporal; “but I can match it. Your colonel may have been hasty, and we all know that he was unwise; but at least he was neither cowardly nor treacherous. Now listen to me, and I will tell you of a non-commissioned officer that was both, and of a good man who became his victim.

“You must know that I, too, served in the Mediterranean, and that the circumstance which I am going to describe came to pass much about the same time with your tragedy.

In the same regiment with me, there was a man named Lednor, a good man, ay a religious man, unusual as, I am sorry to say, it then was to find a soldier religious. Lednor had once been a sergeant, though for some offence or other, so trifling in itself that I cannot recollect its nature, he was reduced to the ranks. I remember, indeed, that the thing could not be avoided ; that it was not through any undue severity on the colonel's part, for, God bless him ! though a strict man, he was not, like yours, a cruel or a capricious man. But you know that in garrison and brigade military faults will sometimes be committed by the best of men, which the best of commanding officers dare not overlook, however willing. Such then was Lednor's case ; who did not cease, when a private, to support the good character which he had maintained while a sergeant, and who was, I have reason to know, marked out for promotion again on the first opportunity. Poor fellow ! his promotion was not of the kind which either he or his comrades expected.

“ When the ——— lay at Malta in 1814, there was at the head of the garrison

what is called a peculiarly smart officer, that is to say, a gentleman who would never be content unless everything relating to the soldier was in apple-pie order, and thought it necessary to ascertain from time to time, with his own eyes, that his regulations were rigidly enforced. Among other matters which gave him great concern may be enumerated his care of the men's barrack-rooms. No article which might have been in use, was on any account whatever to be left lying about. The men's brushes, their combs, their necessaries in general, were to be packed in their knapsacks regularly every day; indeed, the fact of having a morsel of bread on the outside of his havresack instead of within, would have subjected the unfortunate culprit to punishment. Now, I am not going to find fault with the general because he had an especial regard to order. We all know that a slovenly barrack-room is the most comfortless of dens, and that the soldier who is allowed to be careless in his quarters, will soon become careless in the field also. But there are limits within which even the love of order might be circumscribed. General ——, however, did

not seem to feel this ; and all our officers were compelled, in self-defence, to become, some to a greater and some to a less degree, positive martinets.

“ I need not tell you that it is customary for the officer of the day to inspect the barracks when the regiment is on parade, and that an orderly sergeant attends him. We had in our corps a Sergeant Barnet—a man whom nobody liked, a sneaking, bullying, yet fawning chap—who favoured one man and not another, not through any regard for the good of the service, but from motives of selfish convenience. He had made up very much to Lednor while the latter was a sergeant as well as himself ; and it was always a subject of surprise how Lednor, a really good man, could tolerate the society of a sneak like Barnet. Yet so it was ; and, either because he knew that Lednor’s reduction was only temporary, or because he made of his good-nature a positive convenience, the intimacy between the two men did not cease, after Lednor had lost his stripes. For Sergeant Barnet being a married man, and Lednor single, the latter was able to do to the former

frequent acts of kindness, which the former was ever prompt to receive, and, to say the truth, was nowise backward to acknowledge.

“The regiment was one day on parade, when Sergeant Barnet, acting as orderly, went with the officer to visit the barrack-rooms. Among others, they came to that in which Lednor slept, and lo! his shoe-brushes lay on the top of his knapsack, which was likewise unbuckled.

‘Whose brushes are these?’ demanded the officer. The sergeant told him. ‘Ah! I am surprised at that,’ said the officer; ‘he is an orderly man in general: I did not expect to find his berth in this state. However, there’s no help for it. Let him go to drill, in heavy marching order, for nine days, and see that his wine is stopped.’ Now, the being sent to drill at the period of which I speak, was another sort of affair from the drilling that goes on at present. Men were marched about, with all their baggage and equipments upon them, from day-light till dark, never resting except during the space of time allowed for eating their provisions. Nine days’ drill, therefore, particularly when accompanied by the stopping of one’s wine, was a

heavy punishment ; and probably there was not another officer in the regiment who would have ordered it on such an occasion as this. But the officer in question was a severe man, and, as Sergeant Barnet knew him to be so, he himself neglected to state how poor Lednor's brushes came to be out of their place. The fact of the matter was this—Sergeant Barnet himself coming home just as the drums were beating for parade, had no time to go to his own berth, and there clean his shoes, but, running into Lednor's, he took the poor fellow's brushes out of his knapsack, and having used, forgot to put them by. If he had been man enough to state this, it is probable that even the officer then on duty would have overlooked it. But his courage failed him ; he received the officer's commands, and the inspection went forward.

“ As soon as the inspection was ended, Sergeant Barnet sought out Lednor, and told him with all possible abruptness that he was ordered for drill.

‘ Why so ? ’ said Lednor, very much surprised. ‘ What crime have I committed ? ’

‘ Oh, I don't know ; ’ was the reply. ‘ Your

berth was out of order, and you must go to drill.'

'That is impossible, Sergeant Barnet,' answered Lednor. 'I packed everything up just before the last drum beat, and I am sure none of my comrades would play me so vile a trick as to pull them about after I was gone.'

'That's no concern of mine,' replied Sergeant Barnet, striving to stifle the reproaches of his own heart by working himself up into a rage. 'My orders are to send you to drill, and I am bound to see them obeyed. So, put on your pack and accoutrements, and march off immediately, if you don't desire that worse should come of it.'

"Lednor was a thoroughly good man, yet he was only a man after all. He could not refuse obedience to the command of a superior; but he lost no time in commencing such a series of inquiries as made him, in the end, fully aware of all the circumstances of his own case. No change was, however, perceptible in his manner. From day to day he underwent his punishment, and at last wore it out. And now, having returned to his room at the conclusion of his nine

days' drill, he found that, in addition to his three comrades, Sergeant Barnet was there. He took no notice of the sergeant. He made no return to his salutation, but, unbuckling both belts and knapsack, he hung up the former on their proper nail, and placed the other at the head of his bed. His bayonet, however, had not been wiped; so he drew it from the sheath, and passed it once or twice through his hand, which was moist with perspiration. Sergeant Barnet stood at that moment with his face towards the window, so that Lednor was in his rear. The temptation was too strong for Lednor. He made a lunge with his weapon, and the sergeant, springing from the ground, cried aloud, 'I am wounded.'

'I could not do it,' exclaimed Lednor, casting the bayonet from him. 'Some power held back my arm. He deserves to die, but I could not kill him.'

"Nor was he killed. The point of the bayonet penetrated the flesh about an inch, but no vital part was struck, and the sergeant walked out of the berth unassisted, and withdrew to his own quarters.

“ Though no murder had been committed, it was evident to all who witnessed the deed, as well as to the unhappy perpetrator himself, that in the eye of the law he was just as guilty as if Sergeant Barnet had died upon the spot. The consequences, also, were never for a moment doubtful. He neither attempted to escape, nor offered the smallest resistance to the guard, which entered immediately to secure him, and he was borne off to the black-hole with a settled conviction on his mind that nothing could save him. It is true that the whole story no sooner went abroad, than by all ranks and classes he was pitied ; nay, there were those in authority who would have willingly screened him had he been disposed to purchase life at the expense of an untruth. For the judge-advocate, among others, visited him in his cell, and implored him not to confess. ‘ Say only,’ was that humane functionary’s advice, ‘ say only that it was an accident, and, my word for it, we will get you off. You had been all day at drill—you had tasted no wine for a week—you were very much enfeebled, and, when in the act of wiping your bayonet, you fell upon

the sergeant. Take up this line of defence, and you may be got through.'

'No Sir,' replied Lednor calmly, 'I will not purchase life by such a gross violation of the truth. I did mean to kill him, and must suffer the punishment which so grave an offence deserves. But I am alone in the world now, and my life will have been well spent if it produce the effect of screening innocent men from the tyranny of such as he.'

"Lednor adhered to his determination. When the day of trial came, he admitted at once that his design had been to rid the regiment of a tyrant; nor could he account for his failure except by attributing so unexpected an issue to some higher power by which his arm had been held back. Under such circumstances the court had but one course to pursue. He was condemned to die the soldier's death, by shooting. Never for a moment had he looked for any other result, nor did he express the smallest wish to have the sentence commuted; but he had a petition to present to the colonel, and the colonel visited him in his cell to receive it.

'What is it that you desire, Lednor?' said

the commanding officer, very much affected. 'I am too sincerely grieved to see you in this situation to think of denying you anything which it is in my power to grant. What can be done for you?'

'This, Sir, and only this,' replied Lednor with perfect calmness — 'that you will order Sergeant Barnet to command the party by whom I am to be shot.'

"The colonel gazed at the man with astonishment. 'Why so?' demanded he; 'what benefit could you derive from that?'

'No matter, sir,' was the answer; 'such is my request, and I pray you not to reject it.'

"Word came to Sergeant Barnet, that such a petition had been presented, and it cut him to the quick. The wound had proved to be so very slight that he had refused to go into the hospital, and though exempt from parades, continued to walk about as usual. But no sooner was he informed of the strange request which Lednor had advanced, than his heart sank within him. He became seriously ill. He put himself at once upon the doctor's list, and never afterwards was fit for duty. As to Lednor, his fate was a me-

lancholy one, even to the last. He was taken out on the day appointed, and with some difficulty persuaded to have the cap drawn over his eyes ; but the party failed even then to do their work correctly. They all loved him ; they were nervous and unsteady, and only two balls out of twelve took effect. These struck him backwards for a moment, but he was immediately on his feet again. Upon which the provost's sergeant ran up, and shot him through the head with a carbine. Such was the fate of as good a soldier as any in the king's service ; and such my tale of punishment. Who can match it in point of severity ?”

“ As we 've got upon the subject,” interposed one whose shattered frame gave evidence of no ordinary service, “ I will try my hand at a yarn too. I don't know whether it will go beyond, I doubt whether it can come up to, either of yours ; but this I perfectly recollect, that never did man suffer amid such a universal lamentation, as the poor fellow whose fate I am going to describe.

“ The regiment to which I belonged was quartered, in the year 1812, at Zante, one of

the Ionian islands. It was the custom of the garrison then to furnish out-lying pickets, which relieved one another about ten o'clock in the morning, at posts which were distant from the city about five miles. Now, whatever may be thought of pickets when an enemy is in front, by us they were regarded as mere relaxations. The men told off for that duty escaped, what all the rest of the garrison had, a tedious drill of five or six hours' continuance; and all of us looked forward to the season when our turn should come, as schoolboys anticipate a holiday. You have both alluded to the prevalent offence of that period,—drinking. We were not more free from it than other corps, though our commanding officer used every possible exertion to repress it. But I am afraid that it was—I wish I could add, that it no longer is, the British soldier's vice; the correction of which would render him, what no soldier ever yet was, or probably ever will be, quite perfect. But I have no concern with that matter at present; let me tell my story.

“In our grenadier company there was a man called Jem Corns, a tall, strapping, pow-

erful fellow — somewhat given to drinking, to be sure, but no sot, and never, as far as I know, incapable of doing his duty. It was his turn, as well as mine, on a certain day, to go upon picket, and we fell in, as usual, for inspection. Jem had acted imprudently that morning. He had drunk a glass or two of aquardente, just enough to make his face red, but not sufficient to unsettle him; and, the sergeant who inspected us happening to be a taught hand, Jem's imprudence did not escape him.

‘ You are drunk ! Corns,’ was the sergeant's address ; ‘ you are not fit for picket. You must fall to the rear.’

“ Now, Jem felt that he was not unfit for picket, though the fatigue of a field-day might have possibly upset him ; so he denied the charge as peremptorily as it was advanced, and hesitated to obey the order. The sergeant most improperly struck him with his cane. I saw Jem's cheek flush to a deep colour, but he said not a word. He quitted his place in the front rank, and retired behind the line.

“ All this occurred previous to the arrival of

the officer, who came up, however, immediately afterwards, and demanded, as usual, whether everything was right? whether the party was complete, and the men sober?

‘All sober, sir,’ replied the sergeant, ‘except Corns. He is drunk; and I made him fall out.’

‘Hulloa, Corns!’ cried the officer, ‘how is this? how come you to be drunk on such an occasion as this?’

‘I am not drunk, sir,’ answered Corns. ‘I don’t deny that I have taken a glass, but I am quite fit for picket, and I hope you won’t take away my turn.’

‘Silence! sir,’ exclaimed the officer, ‘or I will send you to the guardhouse.’

“Now, you must know, that this officer was a very sharp hand, and Jem did not particularly like him. They had never, indeed, had words before, because he was not of our company; but it was known to us all that he was very free in dealing his blows about, and that he had even cut one man in the calf of the leg with his sword. Had Jem been without his glass, the circumstance would have either not

occurred to him at all, or having done so, it would have produced no effect upon his feelings; for Corns was a good soldier, and on common occasions particularly civil. But to-day he was just so far beside himself as to be ripe for a dispute, no matter who the party might be which should seem to provoke it. He accordingly repeated his denial of the charge brought against him, and reiterated his demand to be sent with his comrades to the outpost. The officer could not endure this: he, too, got into passion, and Jem was ordered into confinement.

“ Had the officer permitted the thing to drop here, as almost any other person in his situation would have done, no great harm would have come out of it. Jem would have been tried by a court-martial, doubtless, and received his punishment. But punishment for such offences, as you all know, never degrades a soldier in the eyes of his comrades; degradation being the consequence of a degrading crime, by no means of a fault which is purely military. The officer, however, was a hot-headed man; and perceiving that Jem continued to remonstrate and complain when given in charge to a

corporal's party, he had the excessive imprudence to draw his sword and to walk after him.

‘If I hear you speak another word, you rascal,’ cried he, ‘I will cut you down!’

“Jem was already on the verge of madness, and the threat thus uttered carried him beyond it. He had his musket, with the bayonet fixed, in his hands, and turning sharp round, he brought it to the charge, right opposite to the officer's breast.

‘You have cut down others,’ cried he, ‘but never, while I have this to defend myself with, shall you cut down me.’ Then flinging the firelock from him, he doubled his fists. ‘Come on, if you dare,’ he continued: ‘your sword against my fists; come on, and see who'll get the worst of it.’

“I have not a word to say in defence of such outrageous conduct. It was the act either of an insane person or a mutineer, and it could not be overlooked. Jem was seized, manacled, and dragged to the black hole; whence, as soon as a court could be assembled, he was led forth to trial. The evidence against him was but too clear, the proofs of his guilt too unerring;

and, his crime amounting to mutiny in what might be called the enemy's presence, only one sentence could be awarded. He was condemned to be shot. Yet, I can't tell how it came to pass, there was at this time no authority on the island competent to carry such a sentence into effect. The consequence was, that the proceedings of the court-martial were sent to England for the Prince Regent's approval, and nearly eight months elapsed ere his royal highness's will became known.

“ During this protracted period Jem Corns was treated with as much of humanity as was at all compatible with his situation. He received the ordinary diet of a soldier; he was permitted to walk round the ramparts, attended by a single sentinel; and an opinion came to be very generally entertained that with him ‘the bitterness of death was passed.’ Jem never came into the notion of his friends. ‘They cannot pardon me,’ was his sole answer to such as talked to him of a prolongation of his days. ‘I have been guilty of mutiny, and to spare my life might cause the crime to be committed by others, and so cost many lives.

I am just as much at a loss as you are to account for the delay, but, depend upon it, I shall suffer.' Accordingly, he never once ceased to make ready for the great change which impended ; and he became at last so calm and so resigned, that I question whether the announcement of a commutation of his sentence would not have disappointed him.

"It was towards the close of the eighth month from the date of his trial, that Jem leaned one morning over the ramparts, and watched, with the sentry who had charge of him, a vessel, as she made her way slowly towards the harbour. The signals which streamed from her mast-head soon showed them that she was a packet, and from her rig and build they were at no loss to determine that she came from Falmouth.

'Here comes my death-warrant,' said Jem, turning to his guard ; 'I am sure that the order for my execution is on board that ship.' The sentry tried first to laugh, and then to reason him out of this idea, but he failed by either method to accomplish his purpose. And the event proved that Jem's forebodings had

not misled him. That packet did bring the minutes of the court-martial, with his royal highness's approval, the latter having, as was pretty well understood, been extorted, not without great reluctance on the part of the Prince. However, that is neither here nor there. Jem's death-warrant was read, and orders were issued for the execution at an early hour next morning.

“As soon as the fact was communicated to him, Jem shut himself up in his cell, and spent the whole of that day, and a large portion of the night, at his devotions. The only person, indeed, whom he would see, was the chaplain; and of food he scarcely partook at all. But when he came forth next morning, so far was he from being weakened by his fast that I never saw him march more firmly, or look round with a more undaunted countenance. Jem was an excellent singer; and ever since his trial had taken especial delight in church-music. He now sang, as he proceeded to the place of execution, the 104th Psalm; and so clear and full, and unbroken was his voice, that we heard it distinctly over all the in-

struments in the band. At last we reached the fatal spot, an empty space in the gorge of a bastion, the inner face in the parapet of which had been newly plastered and fronted with a sort of stucco. With his back to this wall, he was directed to kneel down; and he agreed to do so as soon as he should have shaken hands with the men of his company, and bid them farewell. I have witnessed many affecting scenes, as you may imagine, but I never saw anything like that. He was permitted to go through the ranks, and each man, as he gave him his hand, burst into tears. He was turning away, when he observed, resting with his face on the rampart, the officer for mutinous conduct towards whom his life was forfeited.

‘ Mr. ——,’ said he, ‘ I hope you, too, will shake hands with me. I bear you no ill-will—I hope that you bear me none. I deserve my fate, and I pray God that my blood may not lie heavy on your conscience.’

“ The officer gave him his hand, but he shed no tear, though his face was deadly pale; and he immediately afterwards staggered from the

parade in a fainting condition. Meanwhile Jem took his station. He besought the commanding officer to exempt him from the humiliation of having the nightcap drawn over his eyes, and assured him in the most pathetic terms that he would not flinch. But the colonel could not consent. He judged, and with great reason, that the sight of their comrade's features would probably render the firing party unsteady, and he would not run the risk of that merely to indulge a fancy in itself so little reasonable.

‘ Well ! comrades,’ cried Jem, as he knelt down and permitted his face to be covered, ‘ I will obey my commanding officer to the last. And mark me—Don’t be afraid. Take good aim, fire steady, and let every ball hit me. See, I turn to you a good front.’

“ He faced full towards them ; and the few words which he spoke were as clear and as firm as if he had been giving orders to a platoon to fire with blank cartridge ; neither was his manner without its effect on the party. They became quite cool and collected ; and on the signal being given, they fired with such accuracy that

not a ball missed its mark. All went clean through him into the stucco beyond, and he died without groan or struggle.

"I can't tell you what became of the officer who brought Jem to his court-martial. We never saw him again, and I rather think that he sold his commission, and quitted the service."

CHAPTER II.

In which the subject of conversation is changed.

“WELL, comrades,” interposes a sergeant—a fine old fellow, with a singularly comic expression of face—“you have told the gentlemen so many stories about hanging, and shooting, and so forth, that it’s ten to one if they don’t leave us impressed with an idea that there is no such thing as fun at all in the army. For my part, I have had to deal with smart officers as well as the rest of you, but somehow or other I never came badly out of such dealings. I’ll tell you what once happened, and if my tale do not end quite so tragically as yours, why that’s no fault of mine.

“The regiment to which I belonged occupied, in the year 1808, the town of Messina, having for its partner in doing the duty of the

garrison, the 21st or Scotch Fusileers. Colonel Adam then commanded the 21st—as taught a hand as need be, but a good officer too, and perfectly just in all his dealings. His name, however, was up in the place, and we were all confoundedly afraid of him; for he did his own duty strictly, and he would never allow other people to neglect theirs. In particular, it was his custom, when field-officer of the day, to visit the guards when he was least expected, and never to overlook the negligence either of officers or men if he found them napping. He once served me a nice trick, though I got the best of it in the end, and became a mighty favourite with him ever afterwards.

“The main guard consisted of a captain, two subalterns, three sergeants, four corporals, two drummers, and eighty rank-and-file; and the guard-house stood at no great distance from Colonel Adam’s quarters. It happened, on a certain occasion, that I was senior sergeant of that guard when Colonel Adam chanced to be field-officer of the day. It happened, too, that he visited us a few hours after guard-mounting, at a moment when all the officers were absent.

I saw him coming, and sent off one of the drummers to look for them, but none of them arrived till after the guard had been formed, and the colonel had expressed himself very much annoyed at their conduct. At last the lieutenant made his appearance.

‘Where have you been, sir? and where is your captain?’

‘He is visiting the sentries, sir.’

‘And the other officer?’

‘I suppose he is doing the same thing, sir.’

“The colonel fumed and fretted for a minute or two, but appeared to credit the story; so he desired that they would never again be absent all at the same time from their guard, and rode away.

“Now men,” says I, as soon as we were dismissed, “I advise you to look out. He’ll be in upon us again, sooner or later, and woe be to us if he don’t find everything in the nicest order. Accordingly, there never was such regularity at the main-guard as prevailed throughout the remainder of the day; and when night came, we were more than ever determined not to relax in our vigilance.

“As a measure of precaution, I charged the men not to lie down till after the grand-rounds should have passed. They obeyed me very rigidly, and kept walking backwards and forwards in front of the guard-house till past eleven o'clock. The officers, of course, took their own way, and retired into their own apartments, of which the doors were shut, and we saw no more of them. At last, about a quarter past eleven, the flare of a lantern gave notice that the field-officer was approaching. ‘Who goes there?’ called the sentinel. ‘Rounds.’ ‘What rounds?’ ‘Grand-rounds.’ ‘Turn out the guard.’ It was done, sir, in the twinkling of an eye. The men were all ready, and in half a second the line was formed. And now it remained only to summon the officers, who, very much to my surprise, had not been roused by the bustle of our formation. I ran to the glass-door which separated their apartment from ours, and knocked loudly,—but no notice was taken. I knocked again,—still all was silent.

‘Hulloa there!’ exclaimed the colonel, ‘why don’t you form your line, sir?—why don’t you desire me to advance?’

“ I could not refuse to take this hint, so I returned to the guard, and with great reluctance required the grand-rounds to advance. They did so, and Colonel Adam immediately fell upon me.

‘ What is the meaning of this delay ?’ demanded he.

‘ I could not desire you to advance, sir, till I had called my officers,’ replied I. ‘ I have called twice, but I can make nobody hear.’

‘ Very well, sir ; do your duty,’ answered he, ‘ and dress your guard. Your line is a very bad one.’

“ I proceeded to obey his orders forthwith. ‘ Drummer Short, and Sergeant Slack,’ cried I, ‘ dress back. Long and Jup, dress up.’

‘ What the d—l!’ exclaimed the colonel, ‘ do you mean to insult me ? Consider yourself under arrest, and go and call your officers.’

“ For the life of me I could not tell how I had offended the colonel. I had only done my duty, and knowing the names of all the men in my company, I had simply made use of my knowledge. What could be wrong in that ? However, this was not the time to remonstrate ;

so I went again to the officers' room, and again knocked and called without receiving any answer. I then burst the door open, and found the three gentlemen stretched on their sofas, black in the face, and a pan of charcoal burning beside them. The mystery was now solved; they were insensible, from the effects of the poisoned atmosphere; and, had they been left a few minutes longer in that state, must have perished. But, by dragging them out at once into the open air, we restored them to their senses, and they were soon able to return to their duty.

“Well, the night passed, and in the morning I was still in arrest, when after breakfast I received an order from our own commanding officer to attend him. I went to his quarters, where I found Colonel Adam; and the following scene occurred.

‘Sergeant,’ said my own colonel, ‘what is the meaning of this? Colonel Adam tells me that he has been obliged to put you in arrest—what have you been doing?’

‘Nothing, sir,’ says I, ‘as I know of. I tried to do my duty, and knowing that Colonel

Adam was a taught hand, I was more than commonly on the alert. My officers were absent, to be sure, but I could not help that ; and the colonel himself knows that they could not help it neither. I think I am the party aggrieved. Did the colonel find anything irregular about my guard ?”

‘ I have nothing to lay to your charge in that respect,’ says Colonel Adam. ‘ You had your line formed time enough, and everything else was in order. But do you think that I will allow you, or any other man, to make songs upon me ?’

‘ Songs, sir !’ says I. ‘ I never thought of such a thing.’

‘ No !’ cries the colonel. ‘ Didn’t you say, when I desired you to dress your line—

Short and Slack,

Dress back—

Long and Jup,

Dress up.’

“ There was no standing this. I thought my own colonel would have dropped from his chair, and Colonel Adam himself, who drawled out the names with the queerest tone imagi-

nable, joined in the laugh too. Neither could I restrain myself; and for a minute we all roared again. But Colonel Adam was the first to recover.

‘Now, will you say,’ cried he, ‘after this, that you did not mean to insult me?’

‘To be sure I will, sir,’ says I. ‘Sergeant Slack, and Drummer Short, and Long and Jup all belong to my own company; and I refer you to the colonel whether it is not so.’

The colonel could scarce control himself sufficiently to assure Colonel Adam that I spoke the truth, and then, Lord, how he did shriek! But the short and long of the matter was this: Colonel Adam gave me the best glass of Hollands I had tasted since I left England, thrust a couple of dollars into my hand, begged that I would return to my duty; and was my steady friend ever after. Now, that’s what I got for encountering one of your smart officers.”

“That reminds me,” exclaims another of the party, “of a circumstance that befell at Jersey, when I was serving out my time there in a veteran battalion. There was a post in the island, to arrive at which the guard was

obliged to march over a long flat piece of sandy beach, passable only at particular hours in the day, because entirely overflowed at high water. I was ordered for this guard one boisterous day in November. The wind blew as if it would have blown its last, and from time to time a smart shower came from the westward, to avoid which both men and officers were glad to face about, and cower under the shelter of their great coats. You may believe, that men marching on such a day and in such a place, would not keep their ranks very correctly. In fact, we straggled tremendously, and our officers, moving one in front, the other in rear, had too much sense to take notice of the circumstance. Well, on we trudged, thinking of nothing at all, but the wind and the rain that beat upon us ; when all at once who should meet us but the general, a confoundedly sharp old fellow, with a timber-toe, and a pair of lantern jaws, and a small grey eye that could look you through and through, as easily as you would say Jack Robinson. The general had a great notion of how guards and pickets ought to march. Though he himself, therefore,

could hardly make head against the storm, and kept his cloak and hat together only by holding on with might and main; he no sooner came within ear-shot, than he hollowed out in an angry tone,

‘What’s the meaning of this? Why don’t you lock up? Was there ever such unsoldier-like marching?’

“Then addressing himself to the officer who led, he exclaimed, ‘What’s your name, sir? what’s your name?’

“The officer holding his right hand up to his ear, and half-lifting his face towards the general, replied, ‘Watt, sir.’

‘What’s your name, I say?’ repeated the general, in a towering passion.

‘Watt, sir,’ answered the officer again, still holding his hand behind his ear.

‘Did ever man hear the like of this?’ cried the testy general, and turning to one of the men, he cried, ‘Who commands this company? what’s the name of the captain commanding this company?’

‘Witch, sir,’ answered the man as loud as he could bawl.

‘ Why this, to be sure, this company. What’s the name of the officer commanding it ?’

‘ Witch, sir,’ again replied the soldier in a still louder tone than before. This was repeated several times, till at last the general became so angry, that he ordered the whole party to halt, and turning his back to the wind began to harangue them.

‘ I’ve been forty years in the service, and never in the whole course of my career, have I witnessed insolence to a superior to be compared with this. I meet an armed party, and find fault with the order of march ; I desire the officer leading to tell me his name, and instead of that, he persists in saying “ What, sir ? What, sir ? ” as if he could not hear me. I then address myself to one of the men, and desire to be informed who commands the company, and his answer is, “ Which, sir ? Which, sir ? ” when it is evident there is but one company here. Now, do you really suppose I am going to believe that you are all deaf, or stupid, or that, being persuaded of the contrary, I can look upon your behaviour as other than a stu-

died insult to myself? No, by ——; and as sure as you have given the insult, you shall reap the reward of it. Come forward the captain commanding.'

"The captain did step forward. He had, up to this moment, been in the rear, and could not conceive why there should have been a check in the line of march.

'I desire to know your name, sir?' demanded the general.

'Witch, sir,' replied the officer; 'Captain Witch, of the —— veteran battalion.'

"The general stared. 'And your name, sir?' addressing himself to the officer to whom he had first spoken.

'Watt, sir; Lieutenant Watt,' was the reply.

The old fellow could not stand this; neither indeed could we. He burst into a roar of laughter, in which we all joined heartily. 'Oh then, by my soul, my good fellows,' said he at last, 'there's been no insult after all, but a mistake entirely on my side. This officer answered correctly enough when he told me his name was What; that man was not farther out when he answered Which to my question. Go

your ways, and I'll order you some grog to make amends for your halt in the rain. But, for God's sake, don't keep a What and Which in the same company any longer, else more mistakes will happen.'

"You may suppose we trudged on, after this, in better spirits than before; and many a good laugh we had over the What and the Which during the time that the battalion continued to hold together."

"Oh, if you're on the subject of fun," interposed a third veteran, "I'll tell my story too. It was no joke at the time it happened—the accident which I am going to describe,—but I've often laughed myself at the recollection of it, and you may laugh too, if you are so disposed."

"You must know, that I began my military life as a militia-man. When Billy Pitt raised his supplementary forces, in the year 1798, I enlisted in the West Middlesex, and was sent with my regiment to do duty at Gosport over the French prisoners, who, to the amount of some thousands, lay in a temporary erection, called Fortune Prison. The prison itself was

a queer sort of a place, built by contract, and of course very insecure, having a low groundwork of brick, about four feet from the foundation, and all above made of boards, pitched without and plastered within. It was surrounded outside by a palisade, between which and the dead wall of the pile was a lane, some twelve feet in width; and along the outer circumference of that palisade the sentries took post day and night, to the number of thirty. Each man had, of course, his box, and each box was numbered, so that we might never commit any mistakes as to our stations; and the guard that mounted every four-and-twenty hours to supply the reliefs, consisted of a captain, two subalterns, two sergeants, four corporals, and a hundred and twenty privates.

“ I was quite a recruit when we arrived at Gosport, so had all the process of drill to go through; which I accomplished within a reasonable time enough, and was pronounced fit for duty. It soon came to my turn to mount guard; and I was sent, together with detachments from some older corps, to take the duty at Fortune Prison. A first guard is always a

nervous thing to a young soldier; and there were circumstances attending this which made even the veteran think of it gravely. For there were some desperate characters among the people whom we were appointed to watch, and nobody could tell how soon they might attempt to force an egress. Nor was this all. There was one post in particular, numbered eleven, of a very ominous cast, where several sentries had been assassinated already; and more were expected to suffer. I must describe it more fully, in order that you may the better go along with me in my narrative.

“ Number eleven sentry-box stood at a point in the circle which looked towards the town; close to it was the mouth of a blind alley, that communicated with the yard of the Blue Boar, and the yard wall itself came in upon the post so closely as to throw the sentinel into a narrow lane. Besides this, number eleven was the only station where no light was permitted to be shown. Elsewhere lanterns were hung up upon the palisades, by means of which the sentries could distinguish a little what might be going on around them; but here, either because

it faced the sea, or for some other cogent reason, which was never explained to me, no light could be exhibited. The consequence was, that facilities were offered at this point to the French prisoners, of which they frequently availed themselves. If the sentry was the sort of man to be gained over by a bribe, they gave him money to shut his eyes, and escalated the palisade; if he refused to be tampered with, and they were determined to go off, they watched their opportunity and put him to death. More than one man had been stabbed when on that post; a fate which had overtaken a soldier of the Flintshire, only two nights before it came to my turn to mount the guard.

“ I was not marked out for this station, for my number was not eleven; and I had no business to go there. But I was a young hand in the midst of old ones, and they bullied me into the post of danger. ‘ Oh, hang him, he’s only one of Billy Pitt’s Tear-droppers; he shall go to the wall. If anybody must die, better that a Tear-dropper should be the man than an old soldier.’ Well, I did not like, at the very commencement of my career, to do an unkind thing

by reporting my comrades, and getting them into trouble; so I yielded with as good a grace as I could put on, and consented to take number eleven. While the daylight lasted, the arrangement gave me no uneasiness; I was just as safe there as anywhere else;—but when night set in, with a fearful storm of wind and rain, my heart sadly misgave me. I grew more and more uneasy as the hour drew nigh which was to see me marched off, and at last I made a final appeal to the sergeant.

‘It’s no use bothering now,’ was the affectionate reply. ‘If you determined to make a fuss about it, you ought to have done so in time; but I am not going to alter the whole arrangement of the guard to please a nincompoop like you.’

‘That’s what I call nice,’ says I to myself; and away I trudged to take my place in the relief.

“It was nine o’clock when thirty fresh hands marched from the guard-house. There was no occasion to load, for that was done every morning at guard-relieving in the sight of the prisoners, and we never drew our charges till we went

off duty; therefore, we had only to support arms, face to the right, and move on. I think I never was out in a more tempestuous night. The wind roared through the chimneys of the prison; the rain came down as if from buckets; and the darkness was so profound that you could not see a yard before you.

‘Mind that you keep a particular look-out,’ was the sergeant’s parting injunction to each of us as we took possession of our posts. ‘This is just the sort of night when the rascals are likely to try some desperate measure; so don’t close your eyes or ears for a moment, and be sure to give the alarm on the very first move.’

“These were his instructions to others. To me he was even more kind than to the rest. ‘I say, Will,’ said he, ‘mind what you’re up to. It was just such a night as this when the poor Flintshire man got stuck; and you’ve no lantern, you know, like the others; so be alive, my man, and take care of yourself. We’ll be with you in a crack, as soon as we hear your shot or call.’

‘Monstrous pleasant,’ thinks I; ‘how very civil he is. It would have been quite as agree-

able though, if he had got me out of the scrape altogether, by restoring me to my proper place on the roster.' But it was no use growling, so I promised to be as watchful as a lynx, and was left alone.

"We had no great-coats then, as soldiers have now, each made to fit a particular wearer, but in every sentry-box a coat was hung up, and the sentry, whether tall or short, was expected to take the benefit of it. You perceive that I am no grenadier; and as the King's tailor at Gosport seemed disinclined to save his cloth, I found, on trying the coat in number eleven box, that it would hold at least two of me. The sleeves came far over my hands, the circumference would have gone round me thrice, and the skirts,—why, they were worse than a lady's train—they dragged upon the ground both behind and before, a foot at least. I felt indeed that I might have passed muster as a scarecrow when thus swathed; but as to any power either to fight or run away, I had none. I therefore hung up the benjamin again on its nail, and made up my mind to get wet in real earnest; for I had no stomach for stand-

ing still in the sentry-box. To be sure, it faced the palisade, and as one's eyes get so accustomed by degrees, even to total darkness, that you can observe objects when they are in motion, so it is possible that I might have been able to do my duty in any common case, and be under cover at the same time. But the recollection of the Flintshire man's fate, and the dread of encountering a similar, should I for a moment stand still, kept me, during the first hour and a half of my watch, in perpetual motion. And you may judge that my beat was none of the most agreeable, when I tell you, that the lane being soft and muddy, I sank at every step up to the top of the shoe. Still, on I trudged backwards and forwards, with eyes as wide awake as ever were those of Argus; and as to hearing, in spite of the whistling of the blast and the rushing of the rain, I believe that not a mouse could have stirred within the circle of the palisade and I not have known it.

“It was the regulation on the Fortune Prison guard, that every quarter of an hour the sentinels should give notice that all was well.

The cry arose with number one, who said, in a loud voice, 'Number one, and all's well;' number two then took it up, and so it went round the building till it reached number thirty. If any number omitted to catch and forward the signal, an alarm was instantly taken, and the patrol went round to ascertain the cause of his silence. I had repeated the cry either six or seven times, I don't exactly remember which, and was still, though getting deeper into the mud, and more thoroughly soaked, pacing my round, when a drain or gutter, that ran along the eaves of the prison, suddenly burst above me, and the water came down upon my head as if it had been poured out of buckets. This was too much even for me to stand; and as the front of my box was flooded nearly half leg deep, I jumped over the hollow, and reached the box itself with a bound. I felt the machine rock; but ere I could determine in my own mind the cause of its shaking, down it came flat upon the ground! It fell forward too, into the very midst of the puddle, thus putting me into as perfect a trap as ever caught mouse; with this difference in the mouse's

favour, that he is not often immersed, chin-deep, as I then was, into water. It was to no purpose that I kicked and sprawled about ; it was quite as useless to roar out. No human being could hear me ; and while the water rose every minute higher and higher, I felt that I was powerless.

“ Well it was for me that the accident occurred just before the minute arrived for passing the cry round the building. Had it been otherwise, I must have been drowned ; for it was impossible to shift my posture, which was flat upon my belly, and the only means I had of avoiding suffocation was by holding up my head, and puffing and blowing like a porpoise. How I did curse my own precipitation, and pray for the arrival of the patrol ! At last the patrol did come. The sentry-box was lifted up ; I was dragged out from beneath it, more dead than alive, and carried off to the officer's room, who kindly dosed me with mulled elder wine and brandy, and caused them to strip me of my wet clothes, and lay me to sleep in a blanket. You may laugh at my scrape if you please, and I can now join you very

heartily, for I never suffered the slightest inconvenience from my ducking : but when I lay under the sentry-box, like a carp in a preserving-trough, you may depend upon it I had no inclination to laugh then."

"But what was the cause of your misfortune?" we ask, as soon as our composure returns. "Sentry-boxes are not liable to be upset in ordinary cases by people jumping into them."

"Neither would mine have been," replies the old fellow, "but for the rascally Frenchmen. The fact was, that for four or five months previous to this unlucky night, the rascals had busied themselves to undermine their prison ; and though their sole instrument was a piece of an iron hoop, they had succeeded in carrying a shaft clean under the sentry-box, and out by the back of a dunghill in the yard of the Blue Boar inn. The earth, too, as they scooped it out, they stowed away in their hammocks, which in three separate tiers hung always from the roof ; and the mouth of the mine they masked by covering the loose bricks with drawings, such as Frenchmen delight in, and execute very skil-

fully. Ay, and more than all that : so cleverly was the work engineered, that they contrived to open out their chamber close beside a slush-hole in the yard, and in such a position towards the sentry's post, that a dung-heap came right between them and his observation. Eight or ten of them likewise had actually escaped, ere the heavy rain weakened the top of their mine so much that the weight of my body, cast suddenly into the box, forced it through. It turned out, therefore, that I could not have more effectually done my duty than in the awkward plight in which my comrades found me ; for the effect of my fall was, to stop up the chamber, and send all the poor devils back again into limbo who had not stolen out ere the accident happened. You may believe that after this a more strict look-out than ever was kept. Ay, and to crown all, the party which effected their escape, after stealing a boat, and arriving within sight of Cherbourg, were all retaken by one of our cruisers, and brought back to their old quarters on a day when, as chance would have it, I was again on duty over Fortune prison."

“Nay, if that be your game,” observes a fourth veteran, “I can tell my story too, though it differ somewhat from yours, and may, in the ears of the very precise, savour of profaneness. But you know that hunger puts all men to their shifts, and when bread is scarce, soldiers can’t always consider whether the mode of seeking it be quite according to rule, or otherwise.

“When Sir John Moore’s army was retreating through Galicia, a party of the 15th Hussars, in which regiment I then served, arrived late one night at a solitary house midway between Lugos and Valmeda. We had had nothing to eat all day, and were famishing, particularly for lack of bread, which had not crossed our lips for some time back ; and as the Spanish peasants generally keep some loaves in store, it became our great object to get possession of the prize at every hazard. A close search, however, in all quarters where such things used to be found, proved unavailing, and we sat round the hearth in the kitchen, wet, weary, cold, dissatisfied, and out of humour. At last it was observed that the padrone and his wife, having seated themselves on a huge chest, near the

fireplace, could not, by entreaties, or any other device, be induced to move. ‘I’ll be shot,’ cried a man of the horse artillery, ‘if the old rascal’s store of bread be not in that chest; and hang me if I don’t get at it in spite of him.’ We laughed, and asked him how he would proceed.

‘Oh, I’ll tell you how to proceed,’ cried he. ‘The Spaniards, you know, are a mighty pious people, and we must humour them. Let’s sing a hymn on our knees, and when they see us in that attitude, the chance is much against us if they don’t kneel too.’

‘A hymn!’ shouted we; ‘what hymn?’

‘Nay,’ replied the artilleryman, ‘I dare say you are all wretched hands at psalmody; but surely we all know “God save the King.” So here goes, boys—Down with you on your marrow-bones, and up with the stave.’

“Down, accordingly, we all knelt; and with faces as grave as if we had been in church, struck up God save the King. The Spaniards stared. One of us contrived to make them understand that we were chanting a hymn to the Virgin; and sure enough they too knelt down, and put their hands together. This was

all that our friend desired. He quietly raised the lid of the trunk, withdrew half a dozen loaves, popped them into a nose-bag, and never was noticed. We had a capital supper that night, and many a good laugh afterwards at the recollection of our successful psalm-singing."

CHAPTER III.

In which a fresh topic is introduced.

“EVERYBODY knows,” we observe, after a short pause, “that British troops, in all the essential qualifications that are requisite to form an army, come behind none in the world. Our system of discipline is beyond all comparison superior to that even of Prussia. Our men have a dogged and immoveable courage, of which neither French nor Germans can boast. Our tactics are more simple, our evolutions more rapidly performed, than those of any other European power; and in physical strength, and the capability of sustaining fatigue, nothing comes near us. Yet we seem to be wanting in that spirit of chivalry which some of our neighbours undeniably possess; and of intelligence, there is perhaps a less proportion in our ranks than elsewhere. How do you account for these

facts? Whence does it arise that we read of fewer instances of individual heroism among British soldiers than among the soldiers of almost every other country in Europe?"

"In the first place, sir," replies our next neighbour, "I am not quite prepared to grant your premises: in the next place, if people in general hear little about our personal exploits, it is because we have no great taste for boasting. But they who, from experience, are acquainted with the stuff that makes up the composition of a British soldier, will be the last to say that he is wanting, either in intelligence or individual gallantry. Lord love you, sir, there's not a man in this house that couldn't tell you a dozen stories at the least, out of every one of which, if a Frenchman had them, he would cook up a romance. Intelligence! what sort of intelligence do you want in a soldier, except that he shall always have his wits about him, and be able to make the most of the circumstances in which he is placed? And as to gallantry, fellows that never lay down their arms till ordered to do so, but fight on, when the odds are three, four, or six to one against

them — if that be not a proof of gallantry, I can't tell you where to look for it."

"Yes, but have you ever known a case in which an individual British soldier has withstood the attacks of odds so fearful?"

"Ay, to be sure I have—fifty such cases; and by the same token, one has just come into my head, which, if it be not irksome to you to listen, I may as well repeat to you."

We urge the veteran, of course, to go on; and he begins thus.

"The regiment in which I served was one of those that, in the year 1799, formed a portion of the force that was employed, under his Royal Highness the Duke of York, in an expedition to the Texel. When we received our embarkation orders, we were, in point of numbers, very weak, for we had gone through the entire campaigns on the Continent, and recruits came in too slowly, after our return home, to make good the casualties which war and climate had occasioned. But that which could not be effected by the ordinary course of enlistment, the encouragement given to volunteering from the militia brought about. Some hundreds of men

from the Sussex regiment joined us at Barham Down ; and such was the urgency of the case, that time was not so much as given to exchange their old uniforms for that of the regiment, ere, together with their new comrades, they were hurried on board ship.

“ The voyage to Holland produced no very remarkable adventures. We had bad weather, and the raw hands suffered in consequence. Nevertheless, we took our share in the landing, and when the action was over, and we mustered on parade, it would have puzzled you to show a more motley group in the army ; for our very muskets were not all of the same bore or make ; and as to dress, it was a hodge-podge from the right of the line to the extreme left.

“ The light company in particular presented a singularly grotesque appearance, being composed almost entirely of the Sussex light-bobs, who in a body had come over to us ; and never were men, designed for skirmishing, more inappropriately appointed. I say nothing of their tight leather breeches—that was the fashion of the day,—nor yet of their tin kettles and jugs, so fastened to their knapsacks, that at every step

there was tinkling enough to disturb the Seven Sleepers. But their head-gear, instead of being low and convenient, and fitting well to the sconce, appeared to have been made for the single purpose of attracting attention. They wore huge bear-skin caps, very handsome, I allow, and therefore not inappropriate to troops intended for parade, and nothing else, but quite out of character among such as were designed to clear woods of ambuscades, to steal unobserved upon an enemy's encampment, and to fight, themselves, under cover as often as an opportunity occurred ; to watch an enemy in pursuit, and harass him when retiring, Lord ! how the old hands did laugh at them ; particularly our Lieutenant Fitzmorrice, a fine, merry, gallant Irishman, whom everybody liked, and who had a kind word to say of everybody. ' Look at those beggarly militia-men ! ' was his constant cry. ' Did the eye of man ever see such creatures ? They are, for all the world, like a bundle of top-heavy nine-pins ; the first high wind will blow them away, or leave them bare-headed.'

" The militia boys took it all in very good

part ; and there was one in particular, a queer-looking clod, called Joe Jowler, that was never behind the smartest of them in giving jibe for jibe. They did their duty, too, very bravely in the sort of scrambling fight that put us in possession of the sand-hills, and made no difficulties about outposts, or any other matter to which it was necessary afterwards to turn them. All this had the natural effect of reconciling more and more to one-another the discordant materials of which the battalion was composed : but the circumstance which ended for ever the disposition on our part to speak slightly of the bear-skins befell in the action of the 19th of October. It was this :

“ It may be necessary to remind you, perhaps, that the plan of attack for that day included a wide movement to the left by Sir Ralph Abercromby's column, which was directed to turn the enemy's right, and fall upon their line of communication. Our regiment formed part of Sir Ralph's column, and we began our march about eight in the evening of the 18th, in order that, ample time being before us, we might reach our point before day-break, at which hour the ge-

neral advance was to take place. Well, away we set, under as heavy a fall of rain as ever came from the heavens, along a narrow road, a sort of lane, hemmed in on either side by steep banks, and so soft under foot that every step the men took sank them up to the calf of the leg. Our progress, with these difficulties to contend against, could not fail to be slow ; and as halts and checks from time to time occurred, the men, wearied and cold, and wet and uncomfortable, fell asleep upon their feet. But this was not the worst of it. We had been given to understand that not a shot would be fired till we should have taken possession of the town of Hoorne, the key of the enemy's position on the extreme right, and a principal post for keeping open their communications with the rear. Neither had we been kept in ignorance as to the circumstance which rendered such a disposition necessary. There was a broad dyke or canal in our front, which it would be necessary to cross, while the bridge lay quite within the control of the enemy, and it was well understood that the very first alarm of an attack upon the lines would lead to its destruction. Never for a mo-

ment, therefore, had it entered into our commander's head to conceive, that either through carelessness, or a rash and ill-judged impetuosity, the attack on the other flank would be precipitated. But he was mistaken in this. There lacked full two hours from the dawn, when, far away to the extreme right, a fire both of cannon and musketry was heard, making us aware that the battle was actually begun by the Russians, while as yet we were three or four long miles from our ground of operations.

‘Push on, push on,’ was now the word that passed from the rear to the head of the column, and the men, as if receiving fresh vigour from the sound, floundered forward. At last the day broke, and we found ourselves at the dyke, close to the ruins of a bridge, of which nothing remained except one or two planks, which the enemy had either forgotten or been too much pressed to remove. Of these our advanced guard took immediate possession; and by means of them we made ready to force a passage, in the teeth of a windmill, crowded, as we could plainly see, with men. Accordingly, the light bobs sprang forward, while a

six-pounder, opening with good effect, soon emptied the mill, and the dyke was crossed. But we did not know the amount of force that was before us. After passing the mill, we emerged into a bean-field, of which the crop was partly standing, and in part made up into shocks; and there came from behind the latter such a volume of musketry as cut us down, company after company, by whole sections. Out of that to which I belonged eighteen men were killed and wounded ere we had an opportunity to return a shot; nor was it possible to tell, except by the smoke of their muskets, whence the fire of the enemy proceeded.

“ It was now that our light company began to extend their ranks, and to skirmish with the enemy's sharp-shooters, amid the laughter of the old soldiers, and considerable merriment among themselves. Yet, it is fair to add, that in spite of their tall caps they did their work capitally. Nor among them all was there one who set more systematically and judiciously about it than Joe Jowler. Joe was a tall, raw-boned, sinewy fellow, somewhat advanced in years for a skirmisher, yet full of spirit, and ready to

crack his joke, both in season and out of season. His comrades often tried to make a butt of him, and now and then he would seem for a few minutes to be what they wished, but he never failed, in the long-run, to turn the tables upon them, and raise the laugh at the expense of his tormentors. As I was saying, none did his work to-day more coolly, or with better system, than Joe. Down he went upon his belly, drawing himself along like a snake through the standing beans, till, having driven off a couple of French riflemen from behind a shock, he there took his station. We had seen him fire several times with effect, and gave him a cheer as often as a Frenchman fell, when all at once three strapping grenadiers rushed from behind another shock, and made as if they intended to take him prisoner; but Joe was as cool as a cucumber. His firelock happened to be loaded at the time. He brought it to the 'present,' and shot one dead. Without an instant's delay he sprang upon another with his bayonet, and ran him through, and then, clubbing his musket, with one blow of the butt he knocked the head of the third to atoms. This

done, he clapped his hairy cap on the point of his bayonet, and turned round.

‘What do you think of the beggarly militiamen now?’ cried he aloud.

‘That they are as fine fellows as ever served the King,’ replied Mr. Fitzmorrice, seizing him by the hand; ‘and that you are the bravest of the brave. There’s a guinea for you, my man; and mind, as often as the anniversary of this day returns, come to me and you shall have another.’

“Joe took his guinea, put it into his pocket with a laugh, and returned to the fight; which ended on our parts in a retreat, not through any fault which we had committed, but owing to the blunders of others.

“It’s not worth while to tell you how we executed this retrograde movement. It was a sad scramble, at the best: regiments getting mixed all higgledy-piggledy, and nobody caring to look behind till he arrived at the ground which he had quitted something more than four and twenty hours previously. Talk of fatigue, I never knew what the word meant till then, for my shoes came off in the mud, and there

were none at hand to supply their place, for our knapsacks had been cut off by the general's order, and left on the field. However, that has nothing to say to the tale of Joe's heroism. Thousands saw what I have described to you; and though no public fuss was made about it, either then or afterwards, I question whether any of Napoleon's guards ever did a more dashing thing, or, as you would express yourself, ever displayed a greater share of personal gallantry."

"I quite agree with you, friend: Joe's was a truly brave exploit, and deserved notice. Was he promoted for it?"

"Why, no, sir," replies our old informant, somewhat sorrowfully; "he was not promoted for it; neither did he desire promotion, for he couldn't read or write, and promotion would have done him no real good. But, if our old commanding officer had continued with us, I am sure he never would have suffered punishment, at all events."

"You don't mean to say that such a man was ever punished?"

"Ay, but he was, though; and under cir-

cumstances that gave great pain to the whole regiment. Years had passed since the affair of 1799; and regularly as the 19th of October came round, Joe went to Mr. then Captain Fitzmorrice, and got his guinea. You may believe that he made free enough with his money; indeed, it was an understood thing, that all eyes should be shut to whatever little irregularities he might commit that day; and Joe was too good a soldier to make them great ones. At last, however, we got a new commander, a man who did not know the regiment, and was quite ignorant of Joe's merits; but a great disciplinarian, who punished the good men, when they made a slip, even more severely than the bad, for the sake, as he was pleased to say, of example. Joe did not think of ascertaining whether or not his new commanding officer would fall into the practices of the old, but went, as usual, on the morning of the 19th for his guinea, and long before noon was as merry as a grig. The colonel ordered him to be confined; had him tried by a court-martial, and sentenced to be flogged. The regiment paraded as usual on

such occasions, and Joe was led out, very much to Mr. Fitzmorrice's surprise; who had gone into the country early on the 19th, and did not return for two days. When he saw who the culprit was, and heard the colonel desire him to strip, he stepped out of the ranks, and entreated that the man might be forgiven, in consideration of his great gallantry, of which he detailed the particulars. Now, though Joe had been too proud to tell this tale himself, I do think the colonel might have listened to Mr. Fitzmorrice; but he would not listen.

‘I don't care what the man may have done,’ was his answer. ‘He has been convicted of drunkenness by a court-martial, and he must take the consequences.’

‘Then, sir, for my sake pardon him,’ replied Mr. Fitzmorrice. ‘If there be blame anywhere, it rests with me, for I gave him the money, and forgot to tell you how for many years past he has been permitted to spend it at his pleasure.’

‘That's nothing to me, sir,’ answered the colonel sternly. ‘If others choose to wink at irregularities, I will not. The man must take his punishment.’

“He did take it. But Mr. Fitzmorrice, returning his sword to the scabbard, quitted the parade, and never did a day’s duty with the regiment afterwards. I can’t tell what became of him. I think he exchanged into some other corps; but I know that he carried with him the unfeigned regards, as he had always possessed the devoted attachment, of every man in the regiment.”

“Your story reminds me of the exploit of a dragoon, during General Fraser’s unfortunate expedition into Egypt,” interposed a second veteran. “As I was an eye-witness to the whole transaction, and bore my share in the perils and fatigues of the campaign, the anecdote, whether interesting or not, may be received by you at least as authentic.”

“In the year 1807, the Sublime Porte having changed sides in the war-dance which then amused all Europe, a determination was entered into by the British government to play the same game in Egypt which they had hindered the French from playing, a few years previously, under Bonaparte and Menou. Such at least was our view of the case, when, together

with two more battalions, the flank companies of some others, a detachment of artillery, a few artificers, and forty men of the 20th dragoons, we embarked at Messina on board of three transports, and set sail, under convoy of a prodigious fleet, for the Red Sea. Our voyage was not a very pleasant one. We encountered a good deal of bad weather, which, without perhaps delaying us very much, made us all extremely uncomfortable; and when we arrived at last at Monfalout, a little to the east of Alexandria, a full half of the squadron which accompanied us was missing. The general, however, recollecting the consequences which attended Sir Ralph Abercromby's unavoidable delay at his anchorage, determined to land while yet the water was smooth, and to commence operations immediately. Accordingly noon of the same day saw eighteen hundred men ashore—the total amount of force which was at his disposal—and in full march towards Alexandria, of which it was his object to gain possession.

“I need not detain you by describing how this handful of men won so important a city. The

outer barricade was carried at the point of the bayonet ; and we were making preparations to storm the place itself, when that portion of the fleet which had lagged behind hove in sight, and covered the surface of the bay with a forest of canvass. The general had already sent in a flag of truce with a summons ; to which the Turks had replied by bidding us do our worst. But, with the appearance of what they believed to be a new fleet on their shores, their courage evaporated. They, in their turn, became the parties to open a negotiation ; and within eight-and-forty hours from the landing of our first division, the British flag was hoisted on the towers and mosques of Alexandria.

“ It soon appeared that the Turks, though cheated into a surrender of the capital of Lower Egypt, were not willing to resign, without a struggle, their dominion over the country ; and that the exaggerated notion which they had formed at first of the amount of our force had died away. Rumours came in, from hour to hour, of formidable preparations that were making to receive us ; while of the Mamelukes, the only armed band that had espoused our cause,

no intelligence could be obtained. General Fraser, however, felt that nothing was to be gained by delay. So he distributed his little army into two brigades and an advanced guard, and pushed upon Rosetta. Once more the bold front shown by the English sufficed to ensure a victory. The Turkish garrison, overcome by a sudden panic, fled, and crossing the Nile, left the detachment in quiet possession of the place.

And now there occurred an event which not only occasioned deep regret at the moment, but exercised over the whole of our future operations the most baneful influence. The officer in command of the corps to which Rosetta had surrendered, forgot that as much depends upon vigilance in war as upon courage. His men were fainting for want of water. He did not so much as use the precaution to plant guards, but permitted them to pile their arms in the great square of the town, and to disperse hither and thither in search of refreshment. It was an unwise act, and it was fearfully requited. The inhabitants, perceiving the helpless situation of our men, mounted the tops of their houses, and made signals to the Turkish force,

which still lingered on the opposite bank of the river. The signals were understood and answered. Some swam their horses across the stream, others followed in boats, and all crowded in overwhelming numbers towards the town. Meanwhile, the natives within the walls, concealing their creases under their capotes, came with pitchers of water to our disarmed soldiers, as they wandered one by one through the streets ; and while the poor fellows were drinking, ripped them up at a blow. It's no use describing the scene that followed. The Turks broke-in in great force ; our people were cut off from their arms, and out of the whole body that had entered the town, only a broken remnant escaped to tell the tale of their own improvidence, and the melancholy fate of their comrades.

“From that hour the confidence which had heretofore animated us seemed to give way ; and though the object of our enterprise was still prosecuted, our movements were destitute of the activity and decision which characterised them at the outset. Of Rosetta it was essential to gain possession, and it could now be re-

duced only by process of regular siege. But we had no battery-train, we were destitute of horses, the roads were little better than tracks along the sandy plain, and our numbers altogether inadequate to a service of such extent and hazard. Still General Fraser would not rashly abandon an enterprise, into which he had very rashly been hurried. We obtained some camels, and loaded them with ship's carronades on one side, and shot, and shell, and cases of powder on the other. Our field-pieces, eight in number, a brigade of seamen undertook to drag; and to facilitate their progress, a body of natives were provided with planks, which, under the direction of certain naval officers, they laid down transversely in front of the guns, so that the wheels of each might be lifted out of the sand. The process was this:—before the leading gun began to move, a platform was prepared for it, which the Arabs continued to fabricate with the loose planks till the last gun had passed; and then gathering up their boards, they once more headed the train, and so kept it slowly, perhaps but constantly in motion. And yet I have no right to speak of the movement

as being too slowly conducted. For, in spite of the cumbersome nature of this novel machinery, the army marched in one day nineteen Italian miles, and completed its investment of Rosetta, with the greatest order imaginable.

“To cover the siege, in the event of any attack from above, it was judged necessary to push forward a detachment towards a neck of land, which, lying between the river on the left and the Lake of Elko on the right, is capable of being maintained by an inferior force against one greatly superior. Four light-companies, under the command of Lieut.-Colonel Macleod of the 78th, formed this detachment, and occupied the village of El Hamed, behind a canal, throwing out a picket to secure both front and rear, of which the latter was by no means more safe than the former. For the Lake of Elko is so shallow that it may be forded in many places, and there was almost as much risk of molestation, either through its fords, or from the opposite side of the Nile, as by a bold advance along the isthmus. Moreover, to keep open the communication between El Hamed and Rosetta, a sergeant's party of twelve men,

with a six-pounder, were planted beside the tower of Abbe Mandour,—a half-ruinous building, with a dilapidated staircase, which commanded an extensive view over the surrounding country. It was my fortune, being then a sergeant, to command at this post on the day when Tremble particularly distinguished himself, so that I not only escaped the horrors which I am going to describe, but was enabled to watch the progress of the affair, from its commencement to its termination.

“ I alluded a short time ago to the friendly relation in which we stood with the Mamelukes, the remains of whom had, by the victorious soldiers of the Porte, been driven off into Upper Egypt. These no sooner heard of our projected invasion than they undertook to support it, on the condition that we would restore to them, if successful, their ancient privileges; and avenge them on their oppressors. As yet, however, we had neither seen nor heard of them. But now, while the siege of Rosetta was going on, and our army lay as has just been explained, several Arabs made their way into our lines with letters; which, bearing

the signatures of one or other of their chiefs, informed us that they were in full march through the desert; and that by-and-by we might expect to be joined, for that they had succeeded in seizing the command of the Nile, and would come down to us in boats. This last piece of information was communicated on the 20th, not long after I had assumed my command at the tower, and it came in such a shape that my friends, even among the superior officers, appeared not to doubt its authenticity. But General Stuart, who commanded under General Fraser, seems to have always distrusted the channel through which these despatches were conveyed. Like the rest of us, he saw the Turks assembling in thousands on the opposite side of the river, and knew that the Bedouins were, almost to a man, opposed to us; and his advice continued to be, even now, when others expressed themselves the most assured, 'Keep a good look-out, for your Mamelukes may turn out, after all, to be Turks in disguise.' To-day he was more than commonly uneasy, desiring that our sentries should be very much on the alert, and that whosoever should fail to

answer, after being thrice challenged, should, no matter from what direction he came, be shot.

“ The post near the tower of Abbe Mandour was a very insecure one ; indeed, frequent attempts were made to surprise it ; and, on one occasion, the whole party, including the sergeant-in-command, had been cut to pieces. We found their bodies still exposed when we went to take possession ; and, bloated as they were from the effects of the night dews and noon-day heats, the stench was terrible. We dug holes for them in the ground, and buried them as well as we could, if that can be called burial, which implies little else than the covering them over with loose sand, which the first high wind was sure to disperse ; provided the wolf-dogs that gathered round us in packs after dark, did not anticipate that circumstance. For I need not remind you that the whole surface of the country presented little else than an ocean of low sand-hills, all of which rolled about and shifted their places according to the direction of the wind, with the violence, and almost with the regularity of waves. Here and there, to be sure, a grove of date-trees diversified the scene, as well

as indicated the spots where water might be had for digging. But except where these tiny spots of green interposed to relieve the eye, a scene more perfectly desolate, and arid, and repulsive, it would be difficult to conceive.

“I know not whence it came about, whether because it was looked upon as inadequately guarded, or that its services were required elsewhere, but I found, on going to my post, that the six-pounder had been removed. The loss of the gun placed me and my party, indeed, in a great measure at the enemy's mercy ; for they had armed boats upon the river, from which they were kept from firing only out of respect for the accuracy and good will with which our gunners used to answer their salute. It appeared, however, that not as yet had the enemy discovered our exposed condition ; for I planted my sentries as usual, and they were not molested ; but as their intelligence was excellent, it seems very improbable that they would have continued long in this, to me, most satisfactory state of ignorance. Be this, however, as it may, no opportunity was ever afforded of judging how the discovery would affect them ; for events

were hurrying forward a catastrophe, eminently disastrous in itself, and scarcely less deplorable in the consequences to which it led.

“We were all unusually on the alert throughout the night of the 20th, and General Stuart had well nigh fallen a sacrifice to our vigilance; for he, too, being on the rove, came up from the lines at Rosetta, alone, and by an unusual route; and was fired upon, happily without effect, by one of my sentries. His object was to ascertain whether all was well; and he seemed pleased when I assured him that we had seen nothing on the move. He was kind enough, likewise, to approve of my intention, in case my post should be attacked,—of withdrawing my men inside the tower, and pulling up after me the plank by means of which the sentry was in the habit of escalading the broken staircase. This done, he returned again to Rosetta. But if the night passed quietly, the case was very different when morning came in. My orders were,—to plant a sentinel on the top of the tower, and to keep him there from the first streak of dawn till dark. The man took his station as usual; but had not long maintained it ere he called

aloud that the river was covered with craft. I ran up, and saw, sure enough, prows, boats, and a couple of gun-brigs in full sail towards us; the whole of which I ascertained, as daylight came in, were crowded with men. What could they be! Turks or Mamelukes? On that head, too, I was not long left in doubt. For they made good their landing, about half way between the tower and El Hamed, and formed up, and advanced at a rapid rate upon the latter position.

“While I watched with breathless anxiety the issues of this movement, I saw come riding from the rear, Tremble, a man with whom I was well acquainted, and who seemed to be the bearer of orders. Tremble was the best horseman in his regiment. He was bold, strongly built, active, and enterprising,—in a word, but for his determined propensity to drink, he would have been the model of a good soldier. To-day, however, he had all his wits about him, and he made the best use of them. Colonel Macleod had a picket of eight-and-twenty men close to Lake Elko, which threw out its sentries, in a sort of skirmishing order, across the isthmus. Between

it and the main body, the Turks, who were all mounted, immediately threw themselves, and the picket was surrounded. It seemed, indeed, the object to suspend all operations against El Hamed itself, till they should have cut the outposts to pieces in detail; and with this, which lay nearest at hand, they made their beginning. Tremble's orders, it afterwards appeared, were peremptory to reach El Hamed with as little delay as possible; and he was not to be deterred by the sight of some thousands of Arab horse between him and the point of his destination, from obeying them. But, instead of a fair dash to this point, he made a departure to the right, so as to join himself to the officer commanding the picket, of whose unskilful distribution of his men, Tremble's soldier's eye made him aware, and whom he was anxious, if possible, to save.

“Collect your men, sir, for God's sake,” exclaimed he. “Form them into a dense body, and I will keep off the Arabs in the meanwhile.” But it was too late. The Arabs gave their charge with the fury and speed of the whirlwind, and the scattered sentries were cut down to a man.

“ I have reason to know that Colonel Macleod saw the flotilla approaching long before I did, and that he had time enough to call in his party, had he availed himself of it. Unfortunately, however, he neglected to do so, either from a disinclination to take the responsibility on himself, or because he doubted the policy of such a move ; but, whatever his motive might be, the result was fatal. The pickets were wholly destroyed. They fought, indeed, with the most determined resolution, and Tremble wielded his sword, among others, with the best effect ; but they were overpowered by weight of numbers, and died where they had stood. It was now that Tremble performed an exploit, the extraordinary valour of which has probably never been surpassed. There were two men left of those that had passed the night at the picket fire ; one, the surgeon of his own regiment, the other a seaman.

‘ Come, sir,’ said Tremble to the first, ‘ lay hold of my stirrup ; and do you, Jack, take a grasp of the horse’s tail, and I’ll carry you safe through to El Hamed.’

“ He was as good as his word. Though the

enemy drew up in dense array to oppose him, he charged with these two men hanging on, as I have stated ; and tumbling the Arabs over like nine-pins, fairly opened a way for himself, with his sword, through the midst of them. His horse, indeed, was so severely wounded, that it dropped dead immediately on his arrival in Colonel Macleod's square. But he reached it, with his two companions, and offered, if anybody would lend him a horse, to cut his way back again to Rosetta.

“ All this, sir, I saw with my own eyes ; as well as the desperate affair that ensued, when, victorious over his detachments, the Arabs pressed their united force against Colonel Macleod and his band of heroes. The charges of these wild men are of a sort which none but those who have witnessed them can imagine. They come and go like the simoom ; sweeping upon you with a rapidity which sets calculation at defiance, and then, when repulsed, they wheel about as if horse and man were one animal, and away, hanging over the brute's sides, and so securing themselves from the effects of your shot. I cannot tell how many

charges of this kind Colonel Macleod's brave men sustained and repulsed, though, as each took place, their front became more and more narrowed, the dead being left where they fell, while the wounded were carefully removed into the centre of the still diminishing square. At last Colonel Macleod was killed by a musket-shot through the brain; when the command devolved on a foreigner, a Major Voglesang; but he exclaiming that 'it was van bat job,' refused to issue an order, a Captain Macallister, the next senior, took the lead. Every thing was done that valour could do against odds so fearful, but it was of no avail; for the wounded cried to their comrades, 'Do not leave us,' and those that were not hurt could not stop their ears to the cry.

'What will you do, men?' exclaimed Captain Macallister: 'make good your retreat, and leave the wounded to their fate; or stand and fight it out?'

'Fight it out, fight it out! We cannot give up our comrades to certain death,' was the answer. And they did fight it out. After losing two-thirds of his party and exhausting his

ammunition, Captain Macallister hung out a white flag, and the survivors, laying down their arms, were marched prisoners up the country."

"And what became of Tremble afterwards?" we asked.

"You know, sir, that the whole expedition ended in smoke; and that we were glad to purchase back our prisoners, by surrendering Alexandria, and evacuating the country. Well then, Tremble came back with the cartel, and his gallantry had been so conspicuous, that there was every disposition on the part of the officers in command to do something for him. But he stood in his own light. No consideration of profit or honour would induce him to abstain from liquor, and it was found impossible to promote him. I served with him afterwards, when I was orderly sergeant, and he orderly dragoon to General Sir John Stuart; but even that situation he could not keep. So true is it, that whatever other good qualities he may possess, a soldier never can make his way in the profession, nor earn an honoured name, unless he be sober."

“ And what became of the doctor and the sailor ?”

“ Oh, they both came back too, and the latter when questioned on the subject used to say, ‘ D— my eyes, if I can tell how I got into the square, only that I took a round turn about the horse’s stern, and was towed along at the rate of nine knots an hour.’ ”

CHAPTER IV.

In which mention is made of strange things that occur in the lives of soldiers.

WE laugh a good deal over these stories, and in the wantonness of an excited curiosity, turn the conversation into a new channel, by remarking, that “Soldiers appear in general to be exempt from the superstitious weakness with which seamen are affected. You never hear of soldiers being visited by the inhabitants of the unseen world, or receiving impressions beforehand of their own deaths, or the deaths of their comrades. How is this fact to be accounted for? Soldiers and sailors in the British service spring for the most part from the same classes of society, and are usually masters of the same kind of education. Whence should it arise that the seaman’s feelings should be so much

more morbid, or his imagination more excitable, than that of the soldier?"

"If the case be as you represent it," replies a fine old fellow in a captain's coat, "the seaman's occupation, his constant intercourse with nature in her loneliness, and the state of excitement in which he always lives, may sufficiently account for the fact. But are you correct in your judgment? I suspect not. We have our legends of ghosts, and presentiments, which are just as well authenticated as those that pervade the fleet; and if you please I will give you a specimen. You will probably smile, and go away incredulous; but to the truth of the details I am a living witness. My story is this:

"In the year 1799 I was quartered at Dover, at a time when the constant expectation of an attack from France kept the inhabitants of the Kentish coast very much on the alert. The garrison was strong, consisting of not less than six battalions, four of which occupied the castle, while the remainder were distributed between Fort ——— and the heights, so that the duty, though strictly attended to,

was not severe, by reason of the numbers that were present to take their share in it. It was my fortune, good or bad, to find my quarters in the castle, and to be an eye and an earwitness there to the circumstance which I am now going to describe.

“ On a certain night in the winter season, the 14th of January I well recollect, I was upon guard, and had for my comrade a man called Giles Markham, a native of Tewkesbury, and a very extraordinary fellow. Giles was one of those reckless beings, who if in secret they admit that things may be which are not vouched for by their outward senses, take good care that their belief shall not be made known to others: a bold, boisterous, rollicking, habitual scoffer; a fellow who would turn into ridicule the gravest subjects, and then laugh at you for not falling in with his humours. In particular, Giles scouted the idea of any state of existence beyond the present. ‘Live for the day, boys,’—such was his favourite maxim,—‘and let to-morrow and next day take care of themselves. You have Scriptural authority for that, and the advice is a good one. At all

events, I shall never trouble my head about such far-off places as heaven and hell, till some inhabitant of the one or the other comes back to tell me how they carry on the war there.' There were plenty in the regiment to laugh at Giles's philosophy; there were some whom it rendered serious; but there was nobody that ever expected to find him reclaimed from his folly, at least by the process which he actually underwent.

"As I have just said, Giles and I were on guard together, one night in the month of January. The air was cold and bracing. There was a sharpish frost, but no wind, and a young moon struggled to outshine the millions of bright stars that twinkled, like so many diamonds, in the deep-blue vault of heaven. Within the guard-house a large fire blazed cheerily, and a merrier set of fellows never sat round it, especially Giles, who seemed half mad with fun and frolic, keeping all of us in a constant roar of laughter. At last it came to his turn to mount sentry. It was eleven o'clock, and he was to be at his post till one, when I should relieve him,—a circumstance which I very much

regretted, because it would hinder me from listening to the conclusion of a story, which the order to fall-in had interrupted. However, the thing could not be helped, and was not worth grumbling at. Away went Giles in the train of the corporal, whose business it was to carry that relief round ; and the rest of us, as if incapable of further enjoyment, lay down upon the guard-bed, and fell asleep.

“ I don't know how long I might have forgotten myself, only I recollect that the fire was beginning to burn dull, when the voice of the sentry at the guard-house door, followed by the rushing of some person into the room itself, awoke me. I jumped up, and saw by the red light of the embers, that the intruder was Giles Markham. His cheeks were as white as a sheet—his limbs trembled—his firelock, which he had brought with him, fell with a crash to the ground, and he threw himself, apparently unconscious of what he was doing, on the settle. The whole of the guard were by this time alarmed, and we crowded round him, demanding—

‘ What's the matter, Giles? what has happened ?’

‘I’ve seen my mother,’ said he, in a choaking voice.

‘Seen the devil!’ replied the sergeant. ‘And suppose you have, why did you quit your post?’

‘Was I to go into the sentry-box while my mother was there?’ demanded Giles, still shaking from top to toe, as if with an ague-fit. ‘I tell you I couldn’t do it—no, not if it were to save my life.’

‘None of your gammon, Mr. Markham,’ said the sergeant; ‘and recollect that there are such things as the articles of war:—it won’t do to crack your jokes at the expense of them.’

‘It’s no joke, as I’ve a soul to be saved!’ exclaimed Giles, somewhat recovering his composure, but with great solemnity. ‘You may believe me or not, just as you please, but I saw my mother five minutes ago as distinctly as I see you at this moment.’

“Giles’s manner was so grave, that such of us as had watches almost unconsciously pulled them out. The hands pointed to five-and-twenty minutes from one, and we made a memorandum of the circumstance; after which the sergeant resumed.

‘I am sorry for you, Giles, but this must be reported to the officer. If he chooses to believe your tale, it will be the better for yourself; but I cannot hide from him that you have deserted your post, and you must take the consequence.’

‘I don’t care what the consequences may be, or to whom you report me,’ replied Giles. ‘Call the officer as soon as you like. I will state the truth to him before you all, and I am willing to abide by the result of such inquiries as the colonel may choose to institute. When the officer comes, you shall hear my story, and I think it’s the last you are ever likely to get out of me.’

“The officer was called. The circumstances of the case were made known to him, and he lost no time in demanding from Giles an explanation of his case. Giles had wonderfully recovered a command over himself before the gentleman came in, and was thus composed, but very serious, when he proceeded to speak.

‘You know where my post was,’ said he, ‘on the platform of number five battery, which overlooks the sea. The sentry whom I relieved reported that all was well, and over the surface of the channel, as far as the eye could reach, not a

thing was moving. The noises from the town, likewise, grew every moment more interrupted, and at last died away, so that, when the clocks struck twelve, there was no sound to mingle with their chimes, except the roar of the tide upon the beach. I have often done duty at that post before, but never till then felt calmed, and sobered down by it. Lord knows what influence was upon me ; but as I walked backwards and forwards, now gazing up into the sky, now turning my glance towards the quiet ocean, I was conscious of emotions such as had long been strange to my breast, and affected me very deeply. I considered my past life ; and the conviction came upon me with irresistible violence that it was not what it ought to have been. I remembered the early lessons of religion which my mother taught me as I sat at her feet in the long winter's evenings, and saw her weep, from time to time, over my father's vices, which were great. "What," said I to myself, "if I had treasured them up!—what, if I had acted upon them ! How different might have been my situation now !" And then,—laugh at me if you will, but it is true,—my eyes filled, I can't tell

why, and my spirit rose in something like prayer to its Maker. Ay, you may well stare to hear me use such language, but what I tell you is the fact. I halted beside the gun, leaned my hand on the muzzle of my piece, and wept like a child. But the feeling which urged me to this, though pure and righteous, was not yet deep-seated. A tear fell upon the back of my hand, and glittered in the star-light. I looked at it, was ashamed of what I considered my weakness, brushed it off, and, dashing my sleeve across my eyes, stood erect.

“What,” said I to myself, “has it come to this? Am I a child again? No. I have taken my line, and I will keep it; so, mother, give me no more of counsels, for they come too late.”

‘Well, I faced about, walked to the end of my beat, and, fancying that I stood in need of rest, I marched towards the sentry-box. Comrades, as sure as there is a heaven above our heads, my mother stood there. I gazed upon her. She was pale, and I thought wasted; and her eyes were fixed upon mine with an expression of sorrow, which I shall never forget to my

dying day. I stood as if frozen to the spot. I could not advance—I dared not retire. I was no longer the master of myself. “This day twelvemonths,” said she, “we shall meet again.” I heard her voice, and it was such as it used to be, when she spoke of fearing God and keeping his commandments. Somewhat feebler, perhaps, but still soft as the notes of a silver trumpet. It went to my heart. My hair bristled up. I would have spoken, but the words stuck in my throat. What could I do? I fled from my post; and now you may make a prisoner of me or not, just as you choose, for I am sure that my days are numbered.’

“You may believe that we listened to this tale with feelings widely different from those which, on common occasions, used to affect us. Some would have ridiculed it if they could, but their own sneer was forced; and on the rest it made no impression. At length the officer spoke.

‘You have told a strange story to account for your commission of a serious military offence, Markham; but this I will do for you. A prisoner you must be, and a report must be

sent in to-morrow morning to the commandant; but he shall likewise be made acquainted with your tale, and I will make it my request that he deal leniently with you. You are a native, you say, of Tewkesbury. Does your mother still live there?’

‘I have every reason to suppose so,’ answered Giles, ‘unless indeed she be, as I make no doubt she is, in her grave.’

‘Very well. Your mother shall be written to; and if we hear from her that she is neither in her grave, nor yet within a day’s march of Dover Castle, you will be punished. If it be otherwise, I will intercede for you, and try to get you off.’

“Giles thankfully came into this device, which was carried through to the letter. He was kept a prisoner all night;—he was reported next morning; and two letters were dispatched, one to his mother, another to the parson of the parish in which she was supposed to reside. In due course of post there came back answers to both; one in the hand-writing of Giles’s father, the other from the clergyman. The latter stated that he had received an intimation, the

very morning when the colonel's application arrived, that the woman concerning whom the inquiries had been instituted was to be buried next day. The latter stated that his wife, after a lingering illness, had died at half-past twelve o'clock on the night of the 14th of January. Here, then, was a coincidence, if such it may be called, for which the wisest will, I think, find it difficult to account. Neither did the wonders of the case end there. Giles was of course released, and returned to his duty; but he became an altered man. Nobody ever heard him make use of a profane jest again, or even a loose expression. He walked softly, like one that mourneth for his mother; he was a constant attendant on public worship. He prayed much when alone; and exhorted his comrades to take warning by him, and change their mode of living. He very seldom alluded to the past, and, when he did, it was gravely and solemnly; and above all, he counted each month and week as it rolled on, not anxiously, but solemnly. We shifted our quarters in the summer, and by most of us Giles's adventure in Dover Castle had ceased to be spoken of: but he never forgot

it. But why make a short tale long? We were in Ashford barracks when the 14th of January came round; and Giles seemed as calm and as healthy as ever. He had gone through a fatigue duty with his accustomed spirit, and went to bed, after saying his prayers. Sir, he was found dead in the morning; and I myself entertain not the shadow of a doubt that he died just as the hands of the clock pointed to half-past twelve. Now, what think ye of that? Are there no such things as warnings when men are about to die?"

"Your story is a very striking one," interposes a man who had not hitherto spoken; "and I cannot pretend to tell anything at all to match it. But what I have seen I may describe, in order that the gentleman may not go away impressed with the idea that soldiers are not warned as well as sailors, when they are going to die."

"It was my good or bad fortune, call it which you will, to serve during the late war in Canada, and to be engaged in most of the affairs that occurred on the frontier, between the troops of the United States and our own. There

is a custom among some of the Peninsular heroes to undervalue Brother Jonathan as a soldier: let me assure these gentlemen that their estimate is formed on most mistaken grounds. At the commencement of the struggle, the American troops might be indifferent enough. They were altogether without experience, and their system even of drill and internal economy was not good. But, in the later campaigns, they displayed to the full as much both of courage and intelligence as could have been displayed by any troops in the world; and as to their humanity and generous bearing towards their prisoners, nothing could exceed it. Jonathan is a queer fellow in some things, but he is substantially honest and right-hearted; and for the rest, he is not one whit more of a boaster than Jean Crapaud, though he very often does what Crapaud does not, — carries his boasts into execution.

“ It happened once upon a time, during the progress of the war, that the regiment to which I was attached lay in position not far from Niagara on the St. Lawrence. Our outposts, occupying the north bank of the river, felt themselves

perfectly secure,—at least in that portion of the line which it was our especial business to observe;—for we took up our ground at a place called Chippeway, and pushed forward our sentries to the water's edge. I do not know whether you are acquainted with that wild country, or have personally witnessed the phenomenon which I am going to describe; but if not, it is necessary that you should be made aware of it. At Chippeway, then, I must inform you, that the influence of the rapids which end in the Falls of Niagara, have begun to be felt. The river, after flowing on in a smooth and silent stream, seems here to change its character; not only pouring its waters forward with accelerated velocity, but, in particular states of the atmosphere, exhibiting an appearance which I have never beheld in any other stream. Without any apparent cause for it, the water will, here and there, rise up like a pillar, which, boiling over at the top for a moment or two, falls to pieces amid a cloud of foam. And then, as to sounds, the roar of the great waterfall can never be said to be absolutely mute; but from time to time, when the condition of the air is favour-

able for the transmission of sound, its effect is tremendous. Over the noise of a battle I have heard it; and not even then without a sense of awe amounting almost to terror. Such, then, was the post committed to our keeping on the 15th of July 1814, and such the picket of which, being then a corporal, I contributed to take charge.

“ There was a man in my company, by name James Sweetlove, an honest, simple-minded, quiet fellow,—a good soldier too, as far as sobriety and cleanliness contribute to make a soldier, but altogether deficient in the sort of spirit which goes far to carry him through whatever difficulties and dangers may beset him. Sweetlove was married, and having left his wife and two children in England, never ceased, from the hour of his arrival at head-quarters, to bewail his hard fate. He was exceedingly attached to them;—it had well-nigh broken his heart to abandon them: and the constant burthen of his song was, that they would never meet again. All arguments, all jokes, all remonstrances, failed to turn him aside out of this melancholy state of feeling. ‘ Well, well,’

was his habitual answer, ‘ you may say just what you please, but when I embraced my wife and little ones on the beach at Portsmouth, something whispered in my ear, that it was for the last time : and you will see whether or not it spoke truly.’

“ Jem Sweetlove was on picket with me during the night of the 15th. It came to his turn to mount sentry by the river’s side at midnight, and he went to his post, not gaily, for Jem was never gay, but as free from oppression as we had seen him since he joined us. Well, I returned to the picket-fire, after planting the reliefs, and had sat about half an hour, chatting, as men are apt to do in such situations with their comrades, when a musket-shot from the line of sentries caught my ear, and a general alarm was excited. We all stood to our arms ; but the firing was not repeated ; and no tumult in the front succeeded it. The officer, accordingly, after waiting about ten minutes, desired me to ascertain the cause of the shot ; and taking with me a file of men, I hastened to obey his orders. Beginning on the right of the line, I ascertained, first from one sentinel

and then from another, that all was quiet in the front, though they too had heard the shot, and for a moment had been startled by it. As I approached the centre, however, where Sweetlove kept post, the intelligence communicated was more explicit. In a word, it was believed that Sweetlove had fired, — but why, nobody could tell, for there had been no movement either on the river or along the opposite bank since the relief went round.

“ Forward I now pushed, towards Sweetlove’s station. There was no moon in the heavens, but the stars were out by millions, — and by their light objects could be discerned at some little distance. Carefully, therefore, I looked abroad, being unwilling to censure without reason ; yet I could see nothing, except the mighty St. Lawrence rolling on in its solitude. I was therefore ready to discharge a volume of abuse at the culprit, when I beheld him make a sudden spring towards the river, cast his firelock from him, and jump in. ‘ Is the man beside himself ! ’ cried I, as we ran forward to save him. Neither was it an easy matter to accomplish that object, for the current was

strong, and the channel deep; and the stream had swept him a considerable distance into the rapids ere we succeeded in getting hold of his clothes, and dragging him to the shore.

“It was no time to find fault when the poor fellow stood before me drenched and shivering, and looking as wild as a startled hare. I therefore contented myself by demanding from him, on our way back to the picket-fire, an explanation of what had happened. At first he seemed unwilling to give it, but at length said—

‘It’s all over with me, corporal! You have often ridiculed my assertions, that I should never see my wife and family again, but before many hours pass you will change your note. I shall be a dead man to-morrow.’

‘Pooh! nonsense, Jem,’ cried I, ‘this is the old story over again. Why, man, your chances are just as good as those of the rest of us,—only you have no heart; and more die for lack of that than by sword or bayonet. Cheer up, cheer up! and tell us why you fired?’

‘It was not I that fired. My piece went off in the struggle,—but I never touched the trigger.’

‘What struggle, Jem? — for heaven’s sake

don't speak in riddles ! There was nobody near your post when we came up ; with whom then could you struggle ?

‘ With my wife, corporal !’ replied he. ‘ Ay, smile and look incredulous, if you choose, but what I tell you is a fact ; and you yourself will admit that it was so, before to-morrow’s sun goes down. Listen, then, and you shall hear all.

‘ You had not left me more than ten minutes, when, on making a face-to-the-right for the purpose of walking my rounds, I beheld, with what feelings you may judge, Margaret standing near me. She was very pale, very thin, and dressed in a long white wrapper. Her hair had broken loose, and was streaming from beneath her cap ; and the expression of her eyes was so sorrowful and sad, that it went to my very heart. For a moment she looked at me in silence ; and then her thin white lips moved, and she said to me — ‘ Jem, leave this place, or it will be too late !’ As I hope to be saved, there was no delusion in the case. I heard the words as distinctly as I hear my own voice now ; and I answered them by stating, that I neither could nor would desert my post. She

repeated her entreaty ; and, finding that I persisted in my determination, she seized my firelock, and strove to wrest it out of my hand. In that struggle the piece went off, and then Margaret, letting go her hold, drew back from me I know not how, for her limbs never turned, and her face was still towards me, with an expression in her eye of the same deep melancholy which had so much shocked me at the first. I gazed after her, when all at once I saw her with my two babies in a canoe. She was pale as before, but they were as red as my coat, — and a horrible red savage sat in the stern, and steered her towards the rapids. Margaret waved her hand to me, and said, — ‘ We meet to-morrow ! ’ I saw that they were getting into the current ; I heard the roar of the waterfall below : — what could I do ? I cast my firelock from me, and sprang into the water to save them ! ’

“ Sweetlove told his tale with a voice and manner so calm and collected, that it was impossible to question his own firm belief in the reality of the vision. He persisted, too, in his belief that he should not survive the morrow, and appeared

altogether so shaken, that it was judged expedient not to employ him again as a sentry. He therefore sat by the fire all night; and when daylight came in, we saw that his hair had suddenly changed its colour. Five hours previously it had been dark brown; now it was as grey as that of an old man of ninety. But this was not all: the enemy attacked us soon afterwards in force, and our pickets were driven in, though not till Sweetlove, who behaved like a gallant soldier, had received his fatal wound, and fulfilled his destiny.

“But I have not yet done. About six weeks after the battle, letters arrived from England, one of which gave an account of the decease of Mrs. Sweetlove and her children; the children having sunk under an attack of scarlet fever, and the mother dying of a decline. Now, what think ye of all this, which is true as I am a living man?”

“Oh, if that be the sort of thing you are in search of,” interposes a third veteran, “I can tell my stories too; both of which may be authenticated by reference to an officer who holds rank in this establishment. For, to a certain

extent, he was connected with both, and, I dare say, recollects them.

“ The regiment in which I served was employed in the expedition to the Helder in 1799, and part of it took a passage in the ship of war, in which the officer to whom I have just alluded, served at the time as a midshipman. Among other individuals embarked, was an Irish drummer, by name Corney Nolan, as brave a fellow as ever drubbed sheepskin or cracked a joke in the presence of an enemy. It was remarked of Corney, that from the hour of his embarkation at Margate till the boats pushed off for the Dutch coast, he never once smiled. Had he been left to himself, he would have kept below during the voyage, for he seemed to have the greatest horror of the deck, indeed, he invariably quitted it as soon as the muster was over, and hid himself among the berths. It was of no use to badger or tease him about his conduct. He would neither change it, nor explain the motives that swayed him, but answered always : ‘ I have my reasons. Let me alone, and mind your own matters.’ At last the Helder point was made ; the boats

hoisted out, and other preparations made to land.

‘Now then,’ said we, ‘Corney, tell us why you were so gloomy on board. It’s not like you at all to be out of spirits; what ailed you?’

‘Faith, then, I’ll tell you, lads,’ answered Corney, ‘for we’re out of the mess now at all events. The devil, for one time, has told a lie, anyhow, and maybe he’ll tell more. An ould hag lucked at my hand in Tipperary long ago, and said, that I’d die in the wather. Now, I don’t mind dyin’ like a man, with the inemy afore me; but to be drowned like a blind puppy—I could not fancy that at all at all. But there’s the land! Hurrah! boys; hurrah! and there’s the French rascals a-top of it! Let’s charge them! and I’ll show you how!’

“Just as Corney spoke, our boat ran into a shoal and grounded, about a hundred yards from the beach. There was a considerable surf running, through which it was necessary to wade; and Corney being the first to jump in, took our present adjutant on his back, and began to push towards the sands. But before

he took three steps a musket-ball struck him in the breast, and he fell dead. Corney, too, accomplished his destiny, for he died in the water after all. This, then, is one of my stories ; now for the other.

“ When the same officer, of whom I have already spoken, held a captain’s commission in the Royal Scots, he had for a servant one Sam Rogers, a man with whom I long lived on terms of great intimacy, and who, as he had received a superior education, so was he perfectly free from everything like a tendency to superstition. On the morning of the day when we drove in the enemy’s pickets into Flushing, he came to his master, and said, that he had had a fearful dream, and wished to communicate its purport to somebody.

‘ What was it, Sam ? ’ asked the captain ; ‘ let ’s have it. I like to hear of dreams above all things.’

‘ You need not talk so lightly of the matter, sir,’ replied Sam, ‘ for my dream refers to you as well as to others.’

‘ So much the better, my good fellow,’ cried

the captain. 'Out with it; I'm dying to hear it.'

'So you shall, then, sir,' said Sam. 'I saw in my sleep a dark cloud pass before my eyes, which gradually opened out, and displayed behind it a thin fleecy vapour, that floated up and down for some time. By and by, shapes began to appear on the vapour; and I beheld, to my astonishment, the coats of arms of several officers, both of the Royals and of other regiments. They were all marked in characters of blood. Below one was written the word KILLED; below another, WOUNDED.'

'And what legend might mine bear, Sam?' demanded his master, still laughing.

'You will be wounded, sir; but Captain Talbot, of the 5th, will be killed, and Lieutenant Wallace of ours likewise. But this is not all. The shields melted away; and there came a voice from behind the cloud, which said, "You must die also!" Now, sir, so confident am I that I shall not survive many hours, that I beg of you to ascertain whether everything that you have committed to my care is safe.'

“The captain would have treated this request with ridicule, but Sam was determined; and he had his own way. The property to be accounted for was, indeed, of trifling value; for we landed, at Flushing, in the lightest possible order; yet Sam insisted upon his master’s taking charge of his own haversack. And it was well that he did so. Of the officers whom he named as doomed to the slaughter, neither escaped. He himself was killed early in the battle, and the captain received a wound, of which he still feels the effects, and will probably continue to feel them till his dying day.—Have not we soldiers, then, just as many warnings, both of our own fate, and of the fates of our comrades, as seamen?”

“Pooh, pooh!” exclaims a fourth warrior. “Is that all that you can tell the gentleman? These are but every-day occurrences. But let him read this. It is a true copy of a letter that was delivered in by the person to whom it is addressed, and is yet preserved among the records of the Prize Office. Talk of men being forewarned of their coming deaths! That’s nothing! Read my letter, sir, and ask the

chaplain whether it be not a genuine document."

We take the epistle thus handed to us, and find, what the reader finds below.

" Copy of a letter from Sergeant Thomas Davis,
76th regiment, to his wife.

" April 15, 1811, Dublin.

" My dear dear wife,

" I received your loving letter in Fermoy. I am very happy to hear that you are in good health, and my family. Dear Mrs. Davis, I have rote these three lines on the 15th instant, but I stopped my hand until the 24th of April 1811, untill I should see how I would pass the Bord. I remain in Fermoy hospital for a long time. They turn me out uncured. I came on the coach to Dublin, having got a very good pass. I thought to remain in Dublin untill I would pass the Bord, untill I would get some money to bring me home to my dear family. But when I came to Dublin I got worse. There is some prize-money coming to me, I hope that you will get for my family. Dear wife, I was

going to rite to you for some money to bring me home, but now it is all over. Lord have mercy on me ! I departed this life on Sunday, about two o'clock. I had not one shilling to bury me in a strange place. You may come to see where I am buried, if you chuse. I hope you will pray for me. Dear wife, I am no more in this world. If you come to Dublin, come to No. 11, Duke Street, Dublin. I have got a young man to rite for me, by the name of John Garland—I bein' so bad that I could not rite it myself. I was in hope of getting my half-year's salary on the 24th of this month, and twenty pounds prize-money. No more at present from Thomas Davis, sergeant of 76th regiment of foot, Ireland. I remain for ever."

"Is this really a genuine letter?" ask we.

"As genuine as the Bible!" answers our gallant friend, with imperturbable gravity; "and, for my part, I think it a great deal more wonderful that a man should write to his wife after he is dead, than that a dead wife should appear to her husband, and tell him that

his hours are numbered. Don't you think so too, sir?"

"It would be hard to decide between them," is our reply; "but this last has the merit of being more uncommon, at all events."

CHAPTER V.

*In which we take up new ground, and deal with
Biography.*

“Now then,” we interpose, seeing that the day is stealing from us fast, “we have but one more request to make; which is, that some of you would give us a sort of sketch of your whole lives, or, at least, of the principal occurrences that have characterised them. We may be mistaken, but we have always believed that a soldier's life, if fairly described, would be found more prolific in striking incidents than that of any other living man. More especially are we led to form this opinion in reference to old soldiers,—to men who served in the first American war, or in times anterior to that. But probably none of the actors in those stormy scenes survive.”

“You are mistaken, sir,” interposes one of our gallant friends; “Chelsea Hospital has always been remarkable for the great longevity of its inmates. It is not very long ago since a comparison was instituted, in this respect, between our asylum and that at Greenwich; and the advantage was found to be on our side, to an extent which you would probably not imagine. In fact, the average of our ages was very nearly equal to the greatest amount of theirs. And to come down to particular instances. There are those still living who have conversed with a Chelsea pensioner and heard from his lips an account of the execution of Charles the First. The man was very old when he told the tale to one who is now an old man himself, but was then in the prime of his youth; and he stated, that his mother held him above the crowd, he being a child, so that he might see the awful sight. And the effect produced upon him was such, that he could never afterwards forget it. He spoke of the King’s calm pale face, of the scowl that sat on the countenances of those around him, of Bishop Juxon as striving in vain to repress his agita-

tion, and of the breathless silence with which a countless multitude gazed upon the preparations. And when the fatal blow fell, and the King's head was held aloft, there was such a cry, so shrill, so heart-piercing, that it never ceased to ring in his ears all his life long.

“ This, however, is not the only instance which we have had among us of life protracted beyond a century. In the grave-yard lies a veteran whose tombstone records, that he married at the age of a hundred, and died at a hundred and twelve, leaving a numerous family behind him. I myself perfectly recollect an old man, who used to sweep the court, and never complained of fatigue, at the age of one hundred and seven. And we have now in the house two, who can look back upon a hundred years, and are yet comparatively robust. Thomas Rosewarren, one of the light-horse, has turned his hundred and fifth year, and is yet as well able to give the history of his early life as any person of half his age. And William Taylor, now in his hundred and third, is scarcely less intelligent. It so happens, that

Taylor has never seen much active service. He was trepanned in the year 1762, and compelled to enlist in the Athol Highlanders, which became afterwards the 77th regiment of foot; but he never went abroad with it; and having taken service for three years only, or till the conclusion of the war, he obtained his discharge, not long after the peace of 1763. He afterwards enlisted in the 104th, and came eventually to serve in a veteran company, from which he was invalided in 1802, and has since 1834 inhabited the hospital. Something he might have to say, if you could lead him on, respecting a mutiny that broke out at Portsmouth in 1763, where it is understood that he played a conspicuous part. But of operations in the field he knows nothing, never having had any share in them. With Rosewarren it is different; and I think that you might find the trouble amply repaid, if you would go over to his room in the infirmary, and converse with him."

We adopt the hint thrown out by our gallant adviser, and repair to the infirmary, where seated in an arm-chair by the side of

the fire, we discover as fine a specimen of the soldier of the old school as the eye of man would wish to behold. His hair, white as the drifted snow, is yet luxuriant about his temples, and his figure, somewhat above the middle height, is straight and symmetrical, affording abundant proof, that in other days it must have been singularly handsome. His face bears a strong resemblance to that of the Duke of Wellington, and the very tones of their voices resemble one another. Rosewarren's eye, like that of the duke, is dark blue, and full of expression. His eyebrow is thick but not heavy, and is considerably darker than the hair of his head. His other features are sharp,—a Roman nose, a cheek which falls in slightly at the mouth, a chin corresponding in shape and size to the mouth, and a smile which wins the heart of him who looks upon it. There he sits, contented and tranquil when alone, and always ready to converse freely, and like a cavalier, with such as approach him. As a specimen of the old soldier's manners and memory I may be permitted, before I bring

him upon the stage, to relate two anecdotes concerning him.

A lady, who will corroborate my statement, but whose name, having no authority to print it, I of course withhold, came more than once in the course of last summer to see Rosewarren, and, being much struck with his gentlemanlike and soldierly air, she was desirous of doing him some little act of kindness. She observed that his watch-ribbon had become shabby, and proposed to give him a new one. "What colour would you like?" said she. The old man looked at her, and replied with the grace of a knight-errant, "I will wear your ladyship's colours, if you please." He got her ladyship's colours two days afterwards, and has worn them ever since.

Not long afterwards the same lady brought a noble marquess, a member of his Majesty's cabinet, to see her cavalier, and introduced him to the old man. The marquess, on questioning him relative to his services, ascertained that he had fought at the battle of Minden, on the first of August 1759. "You were commanded on

that occasion by the Marquess of Granby," said the nobleman. "Pardon me, sir," replied the old soldier, "I wish we had been ; there would have been in that case no ground of accusation against us. Our leader was Lord George Sackville, who did not cover himself with glory." The marquess smiled, and owned the correction. But it is high time to let the veteran speak for himself. Here is a compendium of his story, as he is ready himself to repeat it to such as may honour him with a visit.

Thomas Rosewarren was born at Wheally-bridge, Cornwall, on the 6th day of June 1731. His father was what is called a captain of miners, that is to say, a superintendent of the works, and paymaster to the men ; and, being handsomely remunerated, acquired in the course of time a respectable fortune. There were in all five children, three sons and two daughters, of whom Thomas was the eldest, and is now the sole survivor ; and they all received, as indeed they were entitled to receive, a good education.

Rosewarren describes his father as a just but an austere man ; a great preserver of dis-

cipline at home, and the ready wielder of a heavy hand. His eldest son did not at all relish the degree of restraint that was imposed upon him, and from a very early period began to meditate some means of escaping from it. Yet being a smart fellow, and exceedingly useful to his father, whose books he kept at the age of twelve years, the latter refused to listen to his repeated applications for leave to push his fortunes abroad. The consequence was, that, finding every other avenue closed against him, he one day quitted the counting-house without giving warning to any one, and, joining a party of Ruffin's regiment, which were looking for recruits in the neighbouring town, he made a tender of his services, and was accepted.

This event befell in 1747, just as the belligerents on both sides had begun to grow tired of the war; and, the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle occurring not long afterwards, Ruffin's regiment was disbanded. Rosewarren, thrown by this act upon his own resources, returned to Wheally-bridge; but the specimen of a soldier's life which had been submitted to him

proved so attractive, that, though somewhat better treated by his father than he used to be, he soon became dissatisfied with home. After occupying his seat at the desk, therefore, for about twelve months, he once more abandoned it, and, joining the 25th regiment of foot, was marched first to Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and afterwards into Scotland. But Scotland had by this time ceased to be a land of romance and adventure. Crushed beneath the heel of the conqueror, both highlands and lowlands lay prostrate, so that during some five years' sojourn on the north of the Tweed, my hero was called upon to perform no more arduous duty than devolves upon a soldier in his own country. He visited consecutively, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Inverness, Fort Augustus, and Fort William; he lay at Drummosse Muir, in the castle of Inversnaid, and elsewhere; but he met with no adventure of which at this distance of time he can undertake to speak as deserving of particular record. The Scotch, he says, were a kind and hospitable people, somewhat uncleanly in their habits, and given to drinking; but he spent

some years of his life very pleasantly among them, and quitted them not without regret.

In the year 1754 the twenty-fifth regiment was quartered at Chatham, when Rosewarren's father became so pressing to have his eldest son at home again, that the young soldier could not resist his solicitations. Not that Rosewarren himself had become disgusted with the service : on the contrary, as he was now a sergeant, and his skill in penmanship and keeping accounts strongly recommended him to his superiors, the predilection which he seems to have all along had for a military life was increased. Yet when his father urged him to relinquish the service, and represented himself as suffering greatly from the want of his assistance, he could not, as a son, refuse. Accordingly, his discharge was purchased, and he made a third attempt to fall into the habits of a settled and regular existence. But it proved just as little satisfactory as those which had preceded it. The old man was still stern, the young one loved freedom and pleasure ; and there grew up between them an alienation which day by day

gathered strength. The result was, that Thomas once more resigned his charge as assistant to the captain miner, and, falling in with a party from the 24th foot, he offered himself as a recruit, and was accepted.

Rosewarren first smelled powder in Minorca, during the attack of which by the French, under the Duke de Richelieu, his regiment formed part of the garrison of Fort St. Philip. Some hard blows were struck there, as the list of wounded and disabled soldiers, which still remains, can testify ; and Rosewarren was not backward to expose himself wherever danger prevailed. But neither the gallantry of the men, nor the perseverance of their leader, could effect impossibilities ; and Fort St. Philip, after a blockade of some weeks, was surrendered on capitulation. The old man speaks with bitter and mortified feelings of the disappointment of himself and his comrades, when Admiral Byng's squadron, after showing itself off the coast, had left them to their fate. " Yet we suffered no dishonour," continues he. " We marched out with our arms in our hands, and we were not required to ground them. But

there was one circumstance connected with the surrender which galled us much. The Duke de Richelieu, though he might be a good officer, was such a diminutive creature, that the crown of his head would have scarce reached to my elbow. I confess that I for one did not like to own myself beaten by such a manikin."

Sent home under terms of the capitulation, Rosewarren spent a couple of years at various country quarters in England; whence, in 1759 he proceeded to Germany, as part of a reinforcement to the corps which then served with the King of Prussia. He arrived in time to take part in the battle of Minden, where he describes the conduct of the British infantry as brilliant in the extreme, and deeply deplores that Lord George Sackville should have restrained the horse from completing the victory which was already won. He fought also at Graebenstein, Homburg, and Milsengen; where both the Marquis of Granby, and the force that acted under him, gained immortal honour. Yet is his account of these affairs very meagre. The tide of time appears, indeed, to have rolled its

waters so heavily over his mind, that it has become irksome to him to enter much into detail respecting either public or private transactions ; and he must be made of materials such as I cannot understand, who, to gratify his own, or even the public curiosity, would tease the old man with many questions.

At the peace of 1763, Rosewarren was, with many other soldiers, sent adrift ; yet the experience which he had had of a military life, not only did not disgust him, but tended only to strengthen the predilection which in early life he had exhibited. He therefore enlisted forthwith into the 7th dragoons, with which he continued to do duty till the month of June 1772, when, in consequence of rupture, he was discharged. He became then an out-pensioner at the rate of — per day, and so continued till the year ——. How he spent his time during this interval, it would little interest the general reader to be told. But, finding by degrees that he had outlived all the associates of his youth, that his patrimony had gone from him, and that the sons and daughters of his brother were in possession, the old man grew weary of the

world, and applied to be received into the soldiers' last retreat. He was admitted; and means, with God's blessing, to lay his bones to rest among those of the former tenants of the place.

CHAPTER VI.

In which a younger Soldier tells his own tale.

“ROSEWARREN’S story is striking enough as far as it goes,” said we as soon as the veteran had ceased to speak: “yet we should like to contrast it with the tale of some more modern soldier,—of one whose career has not been, on the whole, so fortunate, and who may be both more able and more willing to describe it in detail. Have you any in the house who have suffered imprisonment in France, for example, or been taken by other powers with whom England was at war?”

“Oh yes, several,” was the reply. “But there is one in particular, who, educated for a different course of life, has perhaps more to say in that respect than his comrades. You had best see him.”

Roberts, the individual alluded to, is sent for. He looks sickly and feeble, as men are apt to do whose constitutions have undergone more than common trials; but his eye has much of intelligence in it, and his style of language is very correct. He expresses himself quite willing to act upon our suggestion, and we sit down together on a bench. Listen, reader, to his tale.

“I was born in the county of Cheshire, about a bow-shot from the borders of Wales, but have always regarded myself as a Welshman, because both my father and mother were of Welsh extraction, as indeed had been all my ancestors, from the remotest time. My father was a gentleman farmer, and a freeholder of the county; who brought up his eight sons in a respectable way, and gave to each of them a good education. For myself, I was bred to medicine, and served the greater part of my time with a surgeon and apothecary in the place. But I was always a wild youth, and gave both trouble and anxiety to those that took an interest in me; and nothing would serve my turn but to quit my master's family

before the time for which I had been bound was fully expired. My master, however, being a quiet, peaceable man, made no great fuss about the matter. He consented to give me a certificate. I came up to London, attended the hospitals for sixteen or eighteen months, and applied for an appointment in the navy. As the war was then hot, and there was a want of young men to serve in the medical department, I found no difficulty, with the assistance of my friends, in getting an appointment. I passed the farcical examination to which candidates were then subjected, and was rated as a surgeon's mate on board the ———.

“From the date of my first appointment up to the autumn of 1805, my life differed in no respect from that of other young men in my situation.—I messed with the midshipmen, gave and took plenty of practical jokes, quizzed the doctor and captain behind their backs, and exercised my skill upon the seamen. We had a jolly time of it, in short, liable now and then to some serious inconveniences, but on the whole such as may still be looked back upon with pleasure. And thus it continued to be till hav-

ing accepted a berth on board the *Calcutta*, of fifty-four guns, we were sent out to St. Helena, for the purpose of strengthening the escort, under which a large fleet of Indiamen and other trading vessels were to return home. But we found, on reaching the place of our destination, that the convoy had sailed some time; and that another and more responsible duty had devolved upon us. Stragglers came dropping in from day to day; and we received orders to wait till a sufficient number should be collected, and then to give them our protection to the nearest port in England.

“It was on the 5th of August that we quit-
ted our anchorage at St. Helena, having in
company the *Indus*, *East-Indiaman*, three
whalers from the South-Seas, and two ships
besides. The winds were fair but light, and we
held our course, neither friend nor foe crossing
our bows, till the 14th of September, when we
overtook a ship called ‘*The Brothers*,’ which
had separated from the Leeward fleet, and was
continuing her voyage alone. This wretched
tub, Captain Woodroff, our commander, consi-
dered it necessary to take under his care, though

she was such a miserable sailer that the whole squadron were obliged to reef their top-sails, in order that she might not be left behind. And a black day to me, and to many more, was that in which 'The Brothers' signalised us for protection. But for him there cannot be a doubt that the homeward passage would have been effected at least three weeks sooner than were expended on it; and then I, and perhaps more than I, should have been this day very different from what we are.

"I am not the sort of man to repine against fate. What must be must; and the care of my person was, doubtless, provided for by a higher power than my own; so I spare you the reflections that are at this moment crowding into my own mind, and go on with my story.

"In proportion as we drew towards the chops of the channel our look-out became more and more sharp; for the French fleet was then in an efficient state, and the narrow seas swarmed with their cruisers. No suspicious sail, however, came in sight till the 25th, when being in latitude $49^{\circ} 30'$ north, and longitude

about 9° west, we discovered in the west-north-west several ships far away in the offing. It was then nearly calm ; and the strangers were at such a distance that we could not make much of them ; but by-and-by a light breeze sprang up, and we ascertained that they approached us rapidly. At last, night closed in ; when, being doubtful whether the pursuers might be friends or foes, we took our station between them and the convoy, and kept dodging on under easy sail ; the watch alone walking the deck, and the rest of the men sleeping at their quarters. Thus it was when the dawn of day showed us the strangers about a league astern. We made the private signal, which was not answered ; we then hailed the Indus, and directed her to make sail ahead with the convoy ; and ourselves dropping astern, Captain Woodroff desired the captain of 'The Brothers' to haul upon a wind, and shift for himself. He stood to the northward, we directly to the south, for the purpose of drawing off the enemy, for such they clearly were, from the merchantmen, though not till we had made a cut

across the bows of a frigate which lay upon our starboard quarter, and was fast coming up with the convoy.

“The force, into the very jaws of which we were thus hurried, proved to be the Rochefort squadron, consisting of five ships of the line, one of 120 guns, three frigates, and two corvette-brigs. The vessel which lay nearest to us was the *Armide*, of 40 guns, which shortened sail so as to let us come up with her, and then, keeping at a respectful distance, engaged us at long shots for a space of about forty minutes. It was not our business, of course, to fight it out. We wanted only to get away; and, by holding on straight to the south, we hoped to lead the line-of-battle ships a long and useless dance after us. And we succeeded, at least in part; for the *Armide* at length got enough of it, and fell astern, while all the rest, clapping on every stitch, hastened to avenge her. The Frenchmen did not all sail alike. There were two, indeed, the *Magnanime*, of 74 guns, and the *Thetis*, of 40, which far outstripped the rest, and gained upon us so fast, the former on the starboard, the latter on the

larboard quarter, that, without disabling one or the other, escape was impossible. Captain Woodroff determined to take a turn with the 74, for which purpose he put up his helm, and bore down; and, with all his sails set, began at pistol-shot distance an action which continued, without intermission, three quarters of an hour. If the two ships had had the sea all to themselves, there's no telling what might have happened; for old Woodroff was a thorough fire-eater, whom an enemy might sink, but not subdue. But the odds against us were too great. The rest of the French squadron came up, one vessel after another, and we, being surrounded and raked in all directions, hauled down our colours.

“The merchantmen, whom we had undertaken to protect, escaped all except ‘The Brothers;’ and Captain Woodroff received, it appears, high praise for his skill and gallantry. But to me, and to many more on board the old Calcutta, the affair proved disastrous in the extreme. No sooner were we boarded, than the Frenchmen took care to ease us of all our superfluous clothing and money. That which

each man happened to have on his back he was permitted to retain ; but the contents of chest and hammock Jean Crapaud appropriated to himself ; and as I was busy with the wounded in the cockpit, with coat off and shirt-sleeves tucked up, my case was not the least hard in the ship's company. But there was no help for it, and complaint would have been useless. I therefore went with my messmates on board the *Magnanime*, which continued cruising about for some days to no purpose, and then stood for Basque Roads, and came to anchor, in a thick fog, off Rochelle. It is a curious fact that a little East India packet ran in among us during the fog, and was taken ; and that the French officers heard from her crew how close to the jaws of death, or capture, they had themselves been steering, for an English squadron had passed the packet not an hour before, and only the thickness of the fog hindered them from espying us, and, of course, from giving us a benefit. It would have done your heart good to see how the French officers skipped about the deck, congratulating one-another on their narrow escape ; whereas of the seamen there

were several who did not disguise their regret, inasmuch as, having tried an English prison in former times, they pronounced it in all respects a more agreeable residence than one of their own ships of war.

“ On the 29th of August the French admiral disembarked his prisoners, which, including the crews of several merchantmen, of the packet, and of his Majesty's 18-gun ship-sloop *Ranger*, previously captured, amounted to a very considerable body. They were immediately classified according to their rank, the officers being entirely separated from the men, while the masters of merchantmen were handed over to our mess, and became partakers in our fortune. This done, the French authorities marched us into a tower, which had been originally built for a light-house, and put us in charge of an old scoundrel who seemed determined to make the most of us. Not a morsel of food or fuel would that man serve out except at the most exorbitant rate. He charged fifteen sous for a bottle of wine which cost him a sou and a half, and all other things in proportion. Lord knows what their motive could be

for giving us this taste of the bitters of captivity at the outset ; but if it was, as it might be, to reconcile us to our fate, there is no denying that they fully succeeded. Our first fortnight's training made all the future ills of life seem light, besides giving us an opportunity of trying our hands at a joke, which turned in its developement confoundedly against us.

“ The old gaoler charged us, as I have said, exorbitantly for everything. He made us pay for the very water that we drank, and fuel was doled out at the rate of an English half-crown for a billet of wood which I could span round with my hands. We had learned that we were to quit his tower on the morrow, so we determined to get one good meal out of him, at all events. With this view, we desired him to provide beef and carrots, and the best wine and bread—everything, in short, which our excited fancies could think of, and to furnish us with a right good supper, of which we promised that he should partake. The old rascal took our orders, and obeyed them ; but instead of serving up the supper first, and getting paid for it afterwards, he told us with all the coolness in

the world, that both viands, and fuel wherewith to dress them, were ready, but that nothing could be passed into our room till it should have been paid for in the first place. We stared at one-another, grumbled a good deal, and ended by laughing heartily. We were in the condition of the biter bit, and we must needs make the most of it. But though we paid for our supper and got it, not a morsel went down the throat of Cerberus. To have allowed that, would have been too good-natured an act on our parts; and the fellow's grin, when we informed him of our determination, showed that he never expected it.

“We had inhabited the tower at Rochelle exactly fourteen days, when, under the guidance of a sergeant and twelve infantry, and escorted from stage to stage by a body of mounted gendarmerie, we began our march towards Verdun. The first day's journey covered a space of eight leagues, which, for men recently let loose from ship-board, and stiff with confinement in a prison, was more than enough; and, at its termination, we were but scurvily treated. They shut us up in a convent and gave us an

indifferent allowance of provisions, for which, moreover, they made us pay, though not extravagantly; and, at an early hour on the following morning, we were again *en route*, compassing seven leagues, which carried us to the town of Morlaix. And I must do the Frenchmen the justice to declare, that from that hour our treatment was of the most liberal kind. The general commanding in the place where we slept the night before, had, it appeared, been taken in one of the West India islands, where our people behaved to him in a manner that, according to his notions, did not correspond with the deference due to his rank. He contracted, in consequence, an inveterate hostility towards the English; and he indulged it in dealing with us with a very high hand. But it was not so anywhere else. On the contrary, as we were the first British captives that had ever journeyed by this route, the authorities seemed quite at a loss how to behave to us; and they indulged their own natural benevolence by treating us with as much care as if we had been countrymen of their own. We never got less than five francs per day. We some-

times got as much as twelve per day, marching money : and when we reached Verdun at last, so considerate were the officers commanding there, that though forced to call in the overplus of what had been issued to us, they deducted only one franc a-day from our allowances, and thus spread the debt, which we unquestionably owed to their government, over a very extended space of time.

“ Verdun stands, as everybody knows, upon the Maese, a branch or arm from which passes very near to one of the gates, from which, indeed, it is divided only by a meadow, called, I know not why, the Priory. It is a fortified town of considerable extent, with a citadel ; and having been long used as a depôt for English prisoners, its inhabitants were perfectly well qualified to act both as our hosts, and spies upon our actions ; for to each of us was offered, immediately on our arrival, his parole, and there were few who did not consider it advisable to accept the indulgence. As to myself, I lodged with a retired captain in the French service, an exceedingly respectable man, a widower, with one daughter, and she a married

woman ; and, during the two years which it was my destiny to spend in the place, I received from them on all occasions the best possible treatment.

“ The degree of liberty afforded to officers on their parole, was, at Verdun, very great. Once a day we had to appear at the commune, and register our names ; but after that, the whole of the twenty-four hours were at our disposal, and we had the full range not only of the town, but of the surrounding country to the extent of three leagues from the glacis. Such as refused to accept this leave, were, of course, more strictly guarded : they lived and slept in the citadel, whence they were not permitted to emerge, even into the town, except by a written passport,—though the passport was in no instance refused, provided the parties applying did not chance to be objects of peculiar suspicion. Meanwhile, in order to amuse the lads immured there, some of the seniors, captains in the navy, had instituted a school, where such as chose to attend were instructed in navigation, and in all things having reference to the rig and management of a ship. There were two of my messmates in the citadel, who, being resolved from the out-

set to escape or perish, refused their parole ; and their fate, though by a very round-about process, proved to be more closely connected with mine than I ever could have anticipated, when we sailed together in the Calcutta.

“ I had been nearly two years in the place, when at dusk one evening I received a visit from these two young gentlemen, at a moment when Madame La Blanc, my young landlady, happened to be sweeping, or in some other way busied in my room. They paid no heed to her, for they took it for granted she was entirely ignorant of the English language ; and as I had never heard either her or her father make use of an English expression, I had no apprehensions that they were carrying their faith too far. Accordingly, though the subject on which they immediately entered was of the most delicate nature, I never thought it worth while to check them.

‘ Doctor,’ said one, by name Hexton, ‘ we want your assistance ;—will you give it ?’

‘ To be sure I will, Paddy,’ says I, ‘ as far as my abilities go. In anything that does not

necessarily involve my own safety, you may command me.'

'Well, then, doctor, we have made up our minds to desert.'

'Then, God be with you, boys!' says I. 'I wish you good luck, and a safe arrival at home.'

'Ah! but, doctor, we can't do without a pocket-compass and a chart of the country; and you are just the boy to get them for us.'

'I get them!' says I, — 'how am I to manage that? You know that they are articles which no tradesman is allowed to sell; and that, if they were sold, the act of buying them would be sufficient to get the purchaser into trouble.'

'We know all that, doctor; but you must get them for us, after all. You are at liberty to go about; we cannot get out except at intervals; and even this visit to you we have been enabled to pay only by humbugging the gendarme: for the fellow on duty at the citadel-barricade, we found out, could not read, so we passed off a scrap of our own written paper upon him for our passport. Therefore, if you

won't undertake to get these articles for us, all our plans will be frustrated; and you won't be very easy under the reflection, that you were the cause of our ruin.'

'Well, boys,' says I, a good deal softened, 'suppose I were to do what I can for you, how much time could you give me?'

'Oh!' cried they, quite delighted, 'we are in no hurry: take your own time — only make the job complete; and we'll never hurry, nor even ask you a question, till you yourself tell us that all is ready.'

'But you will want a great deal more than a chart and a pocket-compass,' said I. 'If you bring your scheme to maturity, you must lie up in the woods by day, and travel only at night; you will, therefore, require a stock of provisions to last you for a day or two at least:—how is this to be got?'

'Why, doctor,' answered Hexton, 'you must furnish these articles too; and, what is more, you must provide us with money.'

'Money, Pat!' says I, 'where do you think I am to get that commodity? I have burned my fingers once or twice already, and I am

not quite such a simpleton as to burn them again."

"And in this, sir, I told him but the truth. I was then a man of credit; so much so, that my indorsement to a bill would get it discounted without scruple at any of the bankers; and to do them justice, my fellow-captives did not often deceive me into backing bad bills.

"Well, it was of no use pretending to hold out on that subject either: Hexton assured me that his uncle, the rector of a parish in Ireland which he named, would pay the bill faithfully; and both appealed to my generosity in so touching a strain, that I consented to become their security. Accordingly, I put my name to a bill for thirty pounds; and that very night the cash was brought back to us in a canvas bag. The youngsters were going to pocket it —

'Not a bit,' says I. 'You have no occasion for money in the citadel. Leave this with me; and whenever you bring the rest of your plans to bear, as you must come here at any rate, the coin shall be ready for you.'

"They saw the propriety of this, or affected to see it; and they returned into the citadel

with light hearts, leaving me to push forward, as I best could, the other arrangements which I had undertaken to mature for them.

“ I had observed repeatedly, when attending at the Commune to sign my name, a Jew pedlar, who had among his wares the very articles of which my friends were in need; and as a Jew seldom acknowledges any tie sufficiently strong to counteract the enticement of gain, I made up my mind to risk the chances of detection, and to deal with him. He was as pliant as I could have wished, and, for an enormous overcharge, put me in possession of a chart and pocket-compass. My next business was, to lay in a small stock of portable provisions; and I purchased, with this view, about eight pounds of good biscuit, half as many of Bologna sausages, and a couple of bottles of brandy. These were stowed away in two haversacks, which, with my own hands, I fabricated; and the young men having warned me of the day when they designed to make their attempt, I reconnoitred the ground, and fixed upon a convenient spot from which to commence operations. I made up my mind that

they ought to go out by the Priory gate, towards the river, and take their chance of penetrating into Germany, the roads in that direction being less narrowly watched in consequence of the stream, and woods and places for concealment being abundant. Having determined upon this, I took the well-filled haversacks and slung them one under each arm; and then ensconcing my whole body in a wrap-rascal great coat, I sallied forth. It was about four o'clock on a winter's evening, and, of course, getting rapidly dusk, — a circumstance which favoured me exceedingly; and as the town-gates were never closed till eight, I felt that there was time enough before me. With a quiet pace, therefore, I proceeded down into the meadow, sought out a rushy spot on the bank of the river, where I concealed my treasure, carefully marking the spot, and returned unchallenged and unheeded to my quarters.

“ I was sitting before the fire, ruminating on the probable events of the morrow, when my young landlady suddenly entered.

‘ You are going to desert,’ said she in French; — ‘ you and the gentlemen who have been so

often here of late are going to desert. Now, mark me—they may go if they please; and should they be rash enough to make the attempt, I hope they will reach their own country: but you shall not budge a foot. It is quite impossible that any one fleeing from this should escape; and you are not going to throw away all your chances of comfort in so mad an enterprise. Unless, therefore, you give me your solemn promise not to accompany them, I will go immediately and inform the lieutenant of gendarmerie of your intentions.

“I stared at the woman, partly wondering by what process it could be that she had managed to dive into our secret, and partly struck with the expression of anxious kindness which glowed in her countenance while she was speaking.

‘You mistake, madam,’ said I; ‘I never had the slightest intention of breaking my parol. I never meant to desert.’

‘Well then the others do; and you mean to assist them. Now, I don’t object to that; only you shall not get yourself into trouble, if I can prevent it. What would you do when

away? get caught ere you had travelled a dozen leagues, and then march off to the Breach-fort, and linger out the remainder of the war within a dungeon. No, no, monsieur, give me the promise I require, or else I go on the instant to the lieutenant.'

"There was no holding out against such eloquence, so I gave the promise,—the more readily, perhaps, because I really had no intention at the moment of forming one of the party of fugitives. Upon which the good lady went away, after solemnly assuring me, that by her my friends' designs should never be betrayed.

"At last the day arrived on which my mess-mates had so long counted; and, true to the hour specified by themselves, they made their appearance in my lodgings. I gave them the money, and walked with them through the Priory gate, and down into the meadow. It was the middle of the day, yet, strange as it may sound, not a human being took the smallest notice of us. We reached the bank of the river in safety. We found the haversacks. The young men threw them across their shoulders, and shook hands with me affectionately. I

don't deny that my heart rose to my mouth as I watched them ford the shallow stream, and gain the opposite bank unmolested; and when they waved their last adieu, it took no ordinary struggle to hinder me from plunging in, and sharing their fortunes. But the recollection of the evils which such an act would bring upon others restrained me; so I retraced my steps into the town with a heavy heart, and went early to bed, in order to sleep away my sorrow.

“ There was, of course, a mighty fuss next day as soon as it was discovered that two Englishmen had effected their escape; and from the prisoners in the citadel all passports were withdrawn. Neither were we in the town quite free from annoyances. Somebody, it was concluded, must have lent them a helping hand, and a threat was held out, that, unless the guilty party were discovered, the privileges of all upon parole would be materially curtailed. I kept my own counsel, as may be believed; for the sure consequence of discovery would have been close confinement in the round-tower, followed, perhaps, by something still

less agreeable. But others, it appeared, had not been so prudent. We had a club at Verdun, whither we used to repair in the evening, to read the newspapers, and smoke a cigar; and I went to it that night as usual, suspecting nothing. To be sure, I had met in the morning an acquaintance in the street, a midshipman belonging to another ship, a rough, rambling, harum-scarum chap, whom nobody suspected of mischief; who, after charging me with having aided the deserters, swore with an oath that he was not going to suffer for my follies. I never dreamed of believing his threat, that he meant to denounce me; and it was well for him I did not, for, by all that's sacred! could I have supposed him in earnest, he should have been disabled from carrying his threat into execution for some time. But the event showed that I had done his sincerity wrong. I had just mixed myself a glass of brandy and water, and had stepped out for a moment, with my cigar in my cheek, when a friend informed me, on my return, that a party of gendarmes were in search of me.

‘ Well,’ said I, though my heart misgave me,

‘it’s of no use trying to run away. I’ll have my brandy and water at all events, and then go and seek them.’ I did so, and soon overtook them.—‘You are in search of me, I understand?’ said I to the officer.—‘Who are you?’ demanded he.—‘My name is Roberts.’—‘And your Christian name?’—‘John,’ replied I.—‘Belonging to the army or the navy?’—‘To the navy.’—‘Oh, then,’ says he, ‘you’re just our man!’ Upon which he ordered his people to carry me to the round-tower, and said he would follow at his leisure. ‘Here’s a nice mess to be in!’ said I to myself. But the thing could not be helped; so, with a hearty curse upon the scoundrel who had betrayed me, I followed my conductors into the citadel, and passed, without a murmur, within the gateway of the round-tower.

“I was ushered up a single flight of stairs, and thrown into a room, which measured exactly six paces across in each direction. There was a window on one side, secured by a double grating, the intervals between the bars of which were exceedingly narrow, while the wall itself was so thick that when stretched upon

the window-sill my feet did not hang down, though I could scarcely touch the stanchions with the tips of my fingers. A truckle bedstead occupied one corner of the room ; which had likewise a stool, a table, and a tub ; but there was no fire-place, nor, consequently any means of keeping myself warm, except by pacing the floor from end to end, and slapping my hands across my chest. And to the undisturbed enjoyment of this species of relaxation the French authorities left me ; not a soul coming near to bring either food or water, for a space of three whole days. At length, when the pangs of hunger had begun to be very severe, the lieutenant of police presented himself.

‘ I am authorised by the governor,’ said he, ‘ to assure you, upon his word of honour, that you shall be restored to all the indulgences which your misconduct has forfeited, provided you atone for your fault by informing me by what route the fugitives proposed to make good their escape. On the other hand, if you presume to palter with me, or refuse to speak

out, worse treatment by far than that which you now experience, will be awarded.'

"I was famishing with want. I could have eaten poisoned food, had it been placed before me; but I could not be traitor towards my countrymen. I therefore told the officer that I knew nothing about their plans, and that, had it been otherwise, I would have died rather than divulge them. He became very angry, and threatened still further; upon which I said: 'You may do your worst. You may come Captain Wright over me, if you will, but neither your arguments nor your threats will induce me to act so base a part as to betray a comrade. You say that you have information, upon authority that you can trust, of my privacy to the whole affair. Go back, then, to your authorities, for if they know so much, they must be as well qualified to remove your ignorance as I am. From me you shall hear nothing.'

'What's that you say?' exclaimed the gendarmes fiercely; for Captain Wright was a great thorn in their sides, and they did not like

to hear his name mentioned, particularly in the way in which I had used it. But I did not repeat my remark. I knew that I was in his power, and thought it unwise to provoke him further; so I explained away my allusion by saying, that I might be driven by despair to commit suicide. This softened the hero a little, who returned to his persuasions; which availed as little now as they had done at the beginning; so that, after half an hour's useless discussion, he loaded me with abuse and went his way. Nor, indeed, could I form any other idea than that they intended to starve me to death; for that night passed, and the whole of next day, without a morsel of food being brought to me; till my very strength began to evaporate, and I was on the brink of desperation. I had heard the buzz of conversation in the apartment below mine, and, by applying my ear to the grating, ascertained that it was filled with refractory conscripts. I saw, just before dark, one of them passing under my window, with a loaf of bread in one hand and a bottle in another. In the agony of my heart I called aloud, 'Comrade! take pity upon a poor

prisoner, who has been confined here four days without food, and go, for God's sake, and tell the first Englishman that you meet, to save me from perishing of want.' The conscript looked up ; he made no answer, but, bolting up stairs, came to the door of my cell, which was likewise grated, and thrusting the neck of the bottle through, desired me to drink. I was afraid to take much ; but I swallowed a mouthful, and it wonderfully refreshed me. Nor did the poor fellow's kindness end here. He ran towards the hospital, and meeting one of the surgeons by the way, told him of my plight ; for which he and his wife, who had recently joined him from home, hastened to apply a remedy. They hurried across with their own dinner, saw the gaoler's wife, and prevailed upon her to convey the viands to me ; and never did famished tiger attack his prey with greater avidity than urged me to the attack of that dish of lobscouse. But the woman did not suffer me to swallow half a dozen mouthfuls ere, by a stratagem, she drew me away from the trencher. She acted both humanely and wisely, for I had no control over my appetite, and should have

doubtless eaten till I died. Yet, I gnashed upon her with my teeth when I found that she had bolted out of the room, carrying the lobsouse with her, during the instant my curiosity had prompted me to spend at the window.

CHAPTER VII.

The same subject continued.

“ I RECOVERED by degrees from the effects of this long fast ; for the woman dealt wisely by me, and I had sense enough to consume even the scanty morsels which she allowed me, slowly, and as it were piecemeal. During the remainder of the three weeks therefore which I spent in the round-tower, my fate differed in no respect from that of men in general, whom their fellow-men may shut up in a solitary prison-house. From day to day I was, indeed, willing to flatter myself that an order for my release would arrive ; but it never came, and escape was physically impossible. Accordingly, when an officer one morning desired that I should dress, because the waggon was ready, and the hour for marching had arrived, I

obeyed him without asking any questions as to our point of destination. And to say the truth, that became known to me soon enough. A journey of some days' continuance, throughout which we were manacled two and two together, and all chained to our seats, conveyed two-and-twenty unfortunate wretches to the castle of Breach, the strong portals of which, as we passed through them, told a tale of hopeless captivity, to which there would be no end except with the restoration of peace to Europe. Neither had our anticipations in this respect deceived us. For a space of not less than seven long years I lay immured within those walls, the inmate of a subterranean cavern, from the arched roof of which the salt-petre hung down in crystals larger and thicker than the largest icicle that ever depended from the eaves of this hospital. It's of no use looking back upon that blank in my existence. Day after day came the same dull round,—a two hours' walk in the castle-yard in the morning, and the same in the evening, and then the society of my brother-captives, in a cell so dark, that even to read, except close to the casemated

window, was impossible. Yet I must do the French justice in one respect. They supplied us always with an abundance of good provisions, and by allowing us to take from among the privates such as we chose to act for us in the capacity of servants, they exhibited an inclination to deal as gently with us as their orders would allow.

“ The world was all shut out from us, and we from the world, so that when, in the early spring of 1814, we were told that our quarters were about to be shifted, we neither knew the cause of the change, nor could guess in what it might terminate. We went forth, however, in gangs of twenty at a time, manacled and chained as we had been while travelling from Verdun, and arrived without accident at Metz, where we became again close prisoners. But this time our occupation of the prison was brief. Again we were *en route*, not manacled now, nor chained, nor yet divided into squads ; but all in a body, slenderly guarded, and furnished each with a billet on some family in every town where we halted for the night. All this astonished us greatly ; yet there was a cause for it,

which in due time became known to us also. We were at the outskirts of Saar Louis, and anticipated our billets as usual, when the commandant suddenly halted us, and desired that we would make our way, as we best could, to Abbeville, for his duties called him elsewhere. Here we were then, not upon our parole, but prisoners at large, in the heart of France to be sure, yet nowise precluded from passing beyond it, could we succeed in eluding notice. We went into the town, and there learned how affairs stood. The allied armies were across the Rhine. The northern provinces were overrun ; Buonaparte had sustained repeated defeats, and the frame-work of the empire was dissolved.

“ During my lengthened captivity in Breach, I had formed an intimacy with an officer of the 83rd regiment, who had been wounded at the battle of Talavera, and taken when the English hospital fell into the hands of the enemy. I had had it in my power, likewise, to do him various acts of kindness on the march ; for I was employed latterly, at Breach, in the convalescent hospital, and receiving pay for my services had

accumulated a little money. Now Mr. ——— had no money, and the military chest in France being by this time thoroughly impoverished, he would have been badly off enough, had I not shared my stock with him, seeing that our allowance of marching-money was not always forthcoming. We agreed to separate ourselves from the crowd, and to make our way if possible into those districts where the allied troops were in occupation. For this purpose we hung behind our comrades, and entering some hours later, we made for a coffee-house, and ordered supper and beds. We were sitting by the fire, when a French officer came in.

‘You are English prisoners?’ said he.

‘We are,’ said I; ‘but there’s nobody to take charge of us. The commandant has directed us to shift for ourselves.’

‘It’s all right,’ said he; ‘but what are you doing here? Why don’t you join your comrades, and get your pay?’

‘What pay?’ exclaimed ———, ‘What entitles us to pay?’

‘Oh, hold your tongue, you fool,’ cried I in English. ‘Never think of asking what they

pay us for. If there be *l'argent* to be got, let us go and get it, and they may discover or invent a reason for issuing it,—that's no business of ours.'

“ He took the hint, and away we went to the place which the officer pointed out; and there, to our great surprise, we received a louis between us,—a sum which in the dilapidated condition of our finances, came to hand very acceptably. Thus enriched, we returned to our inn more light-hearted than we had been before; and having finished our supper, and drunk success to the new order of things, we went to bed and slept soundly.

“ We adhered to our determination of shaking off the crowd, and waited in our lodgings next morning, till all the rest were gone. We then took the road, and directing our faces towards Amiens, we passed through Thionville altogether unmolested. To one serious inconvenience we were, indeed, subjected. There was no money to be got; and though at every town people received us kindly, fed, lodged, and otherwise were tender of us, we felt the want of a little loose cash, while trudging along,

very acutely. When we reached Abbeville, our stock was reduced to one shilling sterling; and the mode in which my companion disposed of that, irritated me not a little. We walked into the town, and were gaping about, not knowing very well what to do, when I missed my friend for an instant, and could not think what had become of him, till I saw him come out of a milliner's shop, with a pair of smart new gloves on his hands.

‘Aha, ———!’ said I, ‘where did those gloves come from?’

‘I have just bought them,’ said he.

‘Bought them!’ cried I. ‘Where got you the money?’

‘Oh,’ says he, ‘I gave the shilling for them.’

“I don't think I was ever in such a passion in my life. It was our last sou. It would have procured several glasses of brandy for us on the march; and there he had gone and bought with it a piece of dress, for which, in his situation, he had no more need than a shark for a pair of spectacles. I abused him like a pick-pocket. But I could not keep my anger long.

We were all the world to one another, and he no sooner expressed his contrition than I forgave him. That night we fared indifferently enough, and our prospects for the morrow were far from brilliant.

“ I need not continue these details much longer. Let it suffice to say, that we pressed on, keeping our faces steadily towards Lyons, and subsisting, on the whole, pleasantly enough, upon the bounty of the people through whose country we passed. At length we arrived within a few leagues of Clermont, where the French and Austrian armies faced one another, the river running between them, and constant skirmishes taking place. We were heartily sick of the sort of life we had been leading, and determined, let come what might, to join the allies ; though prudence, and to say the truth, our stern necessities, compelled us to take Clermont on our route. Accordingly we moved towards it at an early hour in the morning, and were already drawing near the gate, when my companion took it into his head to wash his handkerchief in a ditch by the

road-side, and hoist it on the end of his stick to dry. The handkerchief was white,—a circumstance which in no degree affected us, because we were not aware of the virtue of that colour in France; but we had not proceeded far ere an occurrence befell which threw some light into our minds. We saw approaching us, at a smart trot, an officer of hussars, gorgeously apparelled, who wore a white cockade in his cap, white favours on his breast, and had his horse's head and mane dressed up with white ribbons. He reached us just as we had halted near a public-house, and, pulling up his horse, exclaimed,

‘You are English?’

We assented; adding that we were prisoners.

‘Nothing of the sort,’ cried he. ‘Napoleon has abdicated. There is peace between France and England, and you are free. So come along, and I will give you — what you probably stand in need of—something to eat; and then you may continue your journey at your leisure.’

“He alighted, and we accompanied him into the *cabaret*, where he not only paid for our

breakfast, but gave us a Napoleon. He was a Frenchman, but seemed delighted at the changes which had occurred in his own country.

“ We bade him good b’ye, gave three cheers for the peace, and pushed into Cleremont. There were no troops of the line in it, the whole of which lay encamped about two leagues off; and the duty was done by some companies of national guards, well appointed, well dressed, and with a decidedly military bearing. The whole place, moreover, seemed giddy with the news of the hour. Bells rang, music played, white flags floated from the church tower, and from every other conspicuous station; while we were as much made of as if we had been the bearers of some important victory achieved over a foreign enemy. But the poor people of Cleremont had been somewhat premature in making this display of their loyalty. Next morning the French army, after blowing up the bridge, marched into the town; and, though an enemy had taken it by assault, greater atrocities could not have been committed. The inhabitants, by way of welcoming their countrymen,

had rolled into the squares, and other open spaces, barrels of wine and beer, with provisions of every description. These were of course consumed; but the miscreants, instead of being grateful for the supply, seemed to be possessed with the spirit of demoniacs, for they rushed upon the spoil like savages, tearing the rings out of the women's ears, and hacking off their fingers to possess themselves of their rings. I never witnessed such a scene in my life, and the shrieks of the unhappy females are still in my ears.

“ This scene of rapine continued throughout the night, and on the morrow the troops marched out; the general alone, with his body guard and staff, remaining to levy a contribution. I was myself a witness to the manner in which the affair was managed. A sum of thirty thousand francs had been demanded. The civic authorities could collect only half the sum, with which they came to the General in a coffee-room, where I was standing. He sat beside a table, and when they told the truth, he said very coolly that he was satisfied. Then, sweep-

ing the money into a handkerchief, he desired an aide-de-camp to place it in a cabriolet, which stood ready harnessed for him at the door.

‘Now,’ said he, ‘you may tell the soldiers that they are released from their oath of allegiance. They may go where they please; they may do what they like with their arms and accoutrements. I have served the Emperor many years, and got nothing. This money will suffice to carry me to Paris, where I shall offer my sword to King Louis.’

“So saying, he stepped into the carriage, and I dare say kept his promise in every particular.

“From that moment we felt like free men, and were restrained from going immediately to the Austrian head-quarters only by the apprehension that we might perhaps fall in with one or other of the marauding parties which then overspread the country in every direction. As soon as it was dark, however, we made up our minds to go; and, letting ourselves drop from the town wall, we passed within a few yards of a sentry, who took no notice of us, nor we of him. Next morning a party of Cossacks met us, one of whom spoke French fluently, and

appeared to recognise us for Englishmen ; and by-and-by we found ourselves in the yard of an inn, where the Prince of Hesse had fixed his quarters. Here we received the most hospitable treatment, especially from two of the general's aides-de-camp, who had commissions in the English service, and were now, as they expressed it, come to take vengeance on the rascally French for the mischief they had wrought in their own country. The general himself, too, was exceedingly kind. He had no money to give,—indeed money was a scarce article everywhere, — but he supplied us with a route, through Rouen to Dieppe, and desired that whatever we might require we should order, and give a receipt for it to the person who supplied us. Wherever there were provisions and liquor to be had, we found the general's route as available as hard cash ; but we gradually discovered that it was useless to look for either in the track of the allied armies. The Cossacks, in particular, swept each town and village, and paid their hosts and hostesses with the exhibition of their loaded pistols. The consequence was, that we were glad to turn aside

from the beaten path, and to trust, as we were compelled to do, being absolutely penniless, to the generosity of the French people themselves. Nor had we the slightest reason to repent of this. Everywhere the door was open to receive us, and no one seemed to grudge what our necessities required.

“It is far from pleasant to travel, even in such a country, with empty pockets, and we were gloomy enough : when at one of our stages ——— fell in, to his great surprise, with a man of his own regiment, who, like himself, had been wounded and taken at Talavera. The man instantly made up to him, and, having ascertained that his officer was destitute, he hastened to convince him that there are few ties more strong than those which bind a good man and a good officer together. ——— and I were sitting melancholy enough in our apartment, when the poor fellow entered, and, ripping up the lining of his jacket, he drew forth a bag containing twenty napoleons.—

‘I saved up these,’ said he, ‘by working at my trade as a shoemaker, in Verdun. You shall take them, sir ; and when we get to

England you can repay me, as soon as it may be convenient to yourself, but not sooner.'

We were both deeply affected by the man's generosity, but refused to take advantage of it. We compelled him to be the purse-bearer, and joining him to our company, pursued our course, which was now prosperous enough. Finally, having reached Dieppe in the evening of the sixth of April, we took our passage in the packet for the morrow; and landed at Brighton just nine years and six months from the day on which I, at least, had last quitted England.

"I was now in my native land, after a tedious banishment; during which I had suffered numerous privations, and pined for freedom: it remained to be seen how far the day-dreams which had amused me in my dungeon were to be realized. The beginning of my renewed acquaintance with Englishmen had not indeed opened very satisfactorily. They charged two guineas a piece for ———'s passage and my own, and one guinea for our honest attendant; a sorry method, as it appeared to us, of evincing their gratitude towards men who had suffered so much in their defence. The custom-house

officers too came down upon us ; for it is necessary to mention that we had equipped ourselves in decent apparel out of the soldier's bounty, and really bore at this time the exterior appearance of officers.

‘ You must have your luggage carried to the custom-house, gentlemen,’ said the guardian of the king's revenue.

‘ By all means,’ cried I. ‘ We have but four shirts among the three of us, and you're welcome to examine the spare one.’ The man smiled, and, finding we were released prisoners, withdrew.

“ And now it remained to determine how we should dispose of ourselves. ——— started for London, in order that he might show himself at the Horse-Guards. It was my duty to repair to Portsmouth ; that having been the English port from which I last sailed. Accordingly, I mounted the coach, having promised to rejoin ——— as soon as possible, and alighted in high spirits with just eighteen-pence in my pocket. I made for the ‘ Blue Posts ;’ being, in all things except a white felt-cap turned up with green, fit to pass muster as an Englishman ; and took my seat in a box,

which I had often occupied before, and called for brandy-and-water. As it stood before me, I began to consider how I should dispose of myself for the night. The hour was late,—I had no money,—I was a stranger in the place. It occurred to me that, instead of giving my orders first, and trusting to the chapter of accidents for the means of payment, I could not do better than take the landlord into my confidence, and be a borrower on his generosity. I told him my tale, in few words, and ended by begging that he would trust me for a supper and a bed. The scoundrel refused point-blank. He trust! he never trusted anybody, and least of all, your wanderers who passed themselves off for persons let loose from French prisons. His answer cut me to the quick. I went and sat down again in the box, utterly dejected; contrasting in my own mind the treatment I had received in France with that which my own countrymen afforded; and my feelings overcame me so much that I could not taste a drop of what stood before me.

“I was ruminating over the occurrence, when a gentleman entered the box; whom, in the

French fashion, I saluted; and who, struck either by my manner, or the expression of my countenance, entered into conversation with me. I repeated to him all that had befallen, and expressed my deep mortification at the landlord's behaviour: upon which the stranger sprang to his feet, ordered the landlord to be shown in, and poured upon him a volley of abuse such as I have never heard equalled from that day to this. His harangue soon gathered a crowd about us, and I verily believe the landlord would have been torn to pieces had I not interceded for him. In other respects nothing could be more fortunate for me. My first acquaintance compelled me to accept a pound-note, and would hardly be prevailed upon to leave his address that I might refund it. The rest claimed the privilege of finding a lodging for me; and not often have I been more made of than by these hearty fellows. It was late before they would allow me to retire, and they all vowed that they would quit the house with me immediately after breakfast.

“I must hurry over much that followed. Next day brought me in communication with

an old messmate, who lent me a uniform coat, and by his advice I went on board the flagship, and reported myself to the admiral. His captain rated me at once on the ship's books, and permitted me to go to London, whither I repaired for the double purpose—of recovering my long arrears of back pay, and making application for a permanent appointment. What a fortnight I had of it there! London swarmed at the time with persons in my situation,—just released from prison, and half mad with joy; and the jollifications that went on, and the follies and absurdities which we committed,—I doubt whether they can be imagined, I am sure they cannot be described. With me, however, they came to an end in about three weeks. After dancing attendance at Somerset House day after day, I received my arrears, and delaying only long enough to rig myself out, I set forth full of glee, and flush with coin, to visit my friends in Cheshire.

“There had been woeful changes at home since I left it. My father was dead; my mother had reposed too much confidence in her daughter's husband; and I too became, in my

turn, his dupe. He borrowed from me almost all my little fortune, and then failed. I lost every sixpence of it ; for I had not so much as taken the precaution to obtain from him a note-of-hand ; and the rest of the creditors would not listen to my story. Still, as long as a guinea or two remained in my purse, I lingered amid the scenes of my boyhood, which were endeared to me, in spite of recent misfortunes, by the associations of other days. At last my money was all gone ; and the friends who received me at first with open arms, began to look cold upon me. I have been imprudent, and rash, but I always had a proud spirit, and it could not brook the altered looks of my relatives ; so I mounted the coach, and returned to London, in the hope of getting appointed to a ship. There was then an office for the sick and wounded, where surgeons and surgeons'-mates were accustomed to apply ; and thither I went to state my case, and ascertain what the Admiralty would do for me. The men in office put me off with civil words ;—‘ They were very sorry they could not employ me just then. There was a long list of names before mine ; but

they would take my address, and send for me when an opportunity to serve me should occur.' I was reduced at this time to my last shilling. I looked round in this great metropolis, and saw that it contained not a single individual who was likely to interest himself to the most minute degree in my welfare. I became gloomy, and well-nigh desperate ; and I went in this mood to make my last application at the office. The gentlemen met me as they had done before, and, when I ventured to reason with them, they grew snappish. ' What I asked for was quite contrary to the rules of the service, and these they would not break through for me or for anybody.'

' Well, gentlemen,' cried I in a passion, and at the same time unbuttoned my coat—' Well, gentlemen, here is my commission ; and may God forsake me if ever under that warrant I serve an ungrateful country again !' I tore the bit of paper to pieces before their eyes, threw it on the ground, and stamped upon it ; and turned away, hating all mankind, and myself among the number.

" I wandered through the streets in despair.

I had no home, no kindred; for all had disowned me, or I had disowned them. I was alone in the world, and in danger of starving. 'Well,' thought I, 'the army is still open to me. Better enlist as a private soldier than do worse.' I uttered this exclamation in consequence of having seen on the wall a placard, which offered a large *douceur*, in addition to the king's bounty, to any young man that would enlist in the 56th regiment. Now, I was not to be taken in by the extravagant promises held out in that handbill. I knew that in India, where the regiment lay, 'copper was *not* to be had for the picking up, nor silver so plenty as that men broke their shins against it, nor yet gold like the pebbles on the sea-shore.' But India was far away, and, having made up my mind to shoulder the musket, I was desirous of indulging the humour at as great a distance as possible from those with whom I had associated in a different sphere. Accordingly, I went towards the place pointed out in the placard, at the sign of the 'Roebuck,' in Red Lion street, determined to strike while the iron was yet hot,

and so put it out of my own power to change my mind.

“As I was passing along the Strand with this intention, some one laid hold of my arm, and, turning about, I saw a young man to whom I had been introduced when last in London, and who then held a commission in the —— regiment of foot. He appeared considerably altered from what he used to be ; that is to say, his countenance was dejected, and his clothes shabby. I asked what had befallen him ; and he told me. After repeatedly running into debt, and, on the strength of his father’s credit, obtaining goods from tradesmen, and selling them at half-price, he had absented himself without leave from his regiment ; for which the commanding-officer, too happy to find a handle against him, had brought him to a court-martial, and he was cashiered. From that hour his father had turned his back upon him, and he was now desperate.

‘And so am I,’ said I,—‘as desperate as the heart of man could wish ; and, as I am just going to take a leap in the dark, I advise you

to jump with me. I am so far on my way to the "Roebuck," where I mean to list.' —— declared that he would do the same thing; so on we went together. Well, we entered the coffee-room, and —— who had a half-crown in his pocket, called for a pot of eightpenny ale and some bread-and-cheese. When we had finished our meal, I desired the waiter to send the landlord.

'Mr. English,' said I, for that was his name, 'I see you are in want of substitutes. We are willing to enlist if you will take us?'

'You are joking, sir,' says the landlord. 'The likes of you don't want to enlist.'

'Oh, but we do, though,' answered I; 'and to prove it, give us the shilling, and we are your men.'

"The landlord could scarcely credit our assertion, but, finding us obstinate, he laid down two shillings.

'Here,' said I, lifting one up, 'I take thee in the name of the King, and promise to serve his Majesty to the best of my power, as long as I shall be thought worthy to act as a soldier.' My companion did the same; on which Mr.

English carried us up-stairs, and after hastily examining our legs and arms, declared himself satisfied. Nay, so convinced was he that we meant to deal fairly by him, that he consented at once to our walking out, and left it to our own discretion to return when we chose. We came back faithfully enough ; but my companion, who had been led into all his scrapes by a wretched woman, with whom he lived, had left me, for about twenty minutes, while we were absent, and now, when he took his seat at the table, with a glass of gin and water before him, was too much cast down to drink it. He went out, as he said, for an instant, and we never saw more of him. For me, I had embraced my new calling after mature deliberation, and never thought of repenting ; so I continued where I was till, in company with several other recruits, I was sent down to Tilbury Fort, attested, and sworn in.

“ I was now a soldier, and determined to do my duty as such, cheerfully and without repining. To be sure, the system at Tilbury Fort was awfully severe. Drill, eternal drill, diversified only with parades to breakfast, and dinner, and

inspections, occupied us all day long, and sent us every night to bed as tired as if we had marched twenty miles. By and by, however, I was transferred to the depôt of my own regiment, which lay at the Isle of Wight; and there things went on as smoothly as any soldier could wish. In fact, the general depôt at Tilbury was under the charge of a well-intentioned old man — no doubt, but still, of a man who had no notion even of washing up plates and basins except by the sound of the bugle. It was different at the Isle of Wight, where the officers did their best to make the men comfortable, and where the men, grateful for kindnesses received, were at once cheerful and obedient, steady, and perfectly contented.

“ I had been at the depôt little more than two months, when I received orders, along with five-and-twenty more, to embark for Ireland in a transport, which was to convey convicts from Cork harbour to New South Wales. We lay a long time in Cove before we started; but at length got up the anchor; and had prosecuted the greater part of the voyage ere anything befell of which it is worth while to give

an account. We had on board two hundred and twenty-nine male convicts; some of them desperate ruffians, and none to be trusted; yet the captain, with an excess of lenity, which is hardly to be accounted for, permitted them to come and go upon deck whenever they chose, the hatchways being open all day long, and battened down only at night. Moreover, the ship was so crowded, and the soldiers' berth so narrow, that we were obliged to eat all our meals upon deck, leaving the firelocks and bayonets below, under the care of a sentry, and ourselves wearing only, as we did all the way out, cutlasses at our sides. No detriment had, as yet, befallen to any one from these arrangements, which were the more hazardous, in that the meal-hours of the guard and of the ship's company fell together; so that twice in the day, at all events, the convicts had the whole of the 'tween-decks to themselves, with ample opportunity to hatch schemes, and carry them into execution. And they did not waste the moments thus afforded them.

“ We were at breakfast one morning as usual; the whole of us upon deck; and a tall,

stout convict, named Murphy, was engaged in the office of shaving his comrades. Murphy was, indeed, the regular convict barber; and, at a certain hour every morning, a case of razors was served out to him, which, after exercising them on the allotted number of chins, he returned to the ship's steward. This caution was exercised in order to prevent the possibility of his using them to cut his own irons, or those of his fellows,—for the convicts all wore chains about their legs; most of them, however, so light as to prove of no serious inconvenience to the wearers. Well, Murphy had been busy some time, and we heard him once or twice cry aloud, putting his head down the gangway, ‘Go to your work, boys! I am at mine!’—when suddenly a man, named Malone, who for his good behaviour acted as head-constable over the rest, rushed up the companion-stairs, and forcing past the sentry, opened the cabin door, where the captain, surgeon, and our officer were sitting, and closed it after him. The next minute out sprang these gentlemen. ‘Guards, stand to your arms! Turn the convicts down!’ This was their

order. Upon which we sprang to our feet, while Murphy, dashing down his razor upon the deck, exclaimed, 'It's all over!' The case was this.

"It is the universal custom in convict-ships to appoint for each gang a sort of chief man, called a constable, as well as a head-constable, or general superintendent over the whole. The individuals set apart for these offices are selected from among the men who either bring with them the best characters, or are marked for their peaceable behaviour; and it is their duty to see that the berths are kept clean, the lights put out, and the men in general subject to a moral control. Among others, there was a youth on board our ship, one Macmorris, who had been an attorney's clerk, and got himself into trouble by keeping bad company, but whose only crime, as far as I could learn, was that he was found drinking with a pickpocket, and involved in the same charge with him. This man came to the head-constable on the morning just alluded to, and told him, with great agitation, that he had discovered a murderous plot; and that, unless the officers were

made aware of it on the instant, the ship's decks would be dyed in blood. The head-constable appearing incredulous, he declared, that if he paused one instant, he would go himself to the cabin at all hazards; upon which the other, seeing that he was in earnest, gave the alarm. And well it was that he did so; for a scheme had been concocted by one of the convicts, a person who had formerly held a commission in the Wexford Militia, but who having been tried and found guilty of keeping concealed arms in his house, and encouraging the peasantry to rebellion, was now under sentence of transportation, to seize the muskets, come upon the guard while at breakfast, tie them two and two together, and cast them into the sea; after which the victors were to steer for South America. And so well had the plan been arranged that the signal for action was partly given; when Providence so ordered it that we were put upon our guard, and the murderous design failed. We were very fortunate, too, in finding in the prisoners' berth, a paper signed by one hundred and fifty names, in which all the points agreed to among the

traitors were laid down. I need not add, that from that day forth the vigilance both of officers and men was sharpened. The convicts were heavily ironed; they were divided into three watches, and only one watch at a time permitted to take the air on deck, till we arrived in the harbour of Sydney.

“ My tale is well nigh told. For the remainder of my career, embracing only a period of peace, presents, even to my own memory, few events over which I am tempted to linger. I reached Bengal on the 4th of October 1816, and continued to do duty there till 1818, when the regiment went to the Isle of France; and of course I went with it. Here the cholera broke out with great fury; and the hospital being short of medical men, I was called upon to lend a helping hand. I cheerfully undertook the task, which the surgeon-general imposed upon me, and have the satisfaction to know, that my services were not entirely useless; but I positively refused promotion. The fact is, that I knew the weakness of my own temper,—that I was irritable and violent; and being exceedingly happy as a private, I

did not wish to run the risk of committing myself in any other situation. As a private, therefore, I continued to serve, till my health failed me, and I was sent home to be invalided in 1821. But what was the value of my discharge to me? I had no home; I had no friends; I had no settled occupation; and accordingly, when informed, on my dismissal from the general hospital at Portsmouth, that a veteran company was about to be embodied for service in the Isle of Man, I volunteered to join it, and was accepted. With that company I did duty till it was reduced, in 1824, when I again volunteered in the regiment of Canadian veterans, with which I continued till it returned home in 1825, and was broken up. On the 24th of December of that year I passed the board at Chelsea; on the 25th I was admitted into the house. I have continued here, happy and contented, ever since, and I hope to die here, and be buried in the old grave-yard.

“ That is my history. It may seem in many respects dull, because common-place, to such as hear it; but to me it was full of strange scenes and great vicissitudes.

CHAPTER VIII.

In which it is shown how a good soldier can die.

I HAVE already so far exceeded the limits of my reader's probable patience, that though the materials around me are as yet scarcely shaken up, I feel that it is time to bring my sketches to a close. The subject would, however, be very incomplete, were I to omit all notice of the manner in which the brave and good inmates of Chelsea Hospital meet the advances of death. I do not mean to insinuate that our society is perfect. There are too many among us, whose lives have not been such as to give them much reason to be satisfied with the prospects that lie beyond life. But there have been others, even in my brief ministration here, whose last moments might excite the envy of the most

pious and best educated elsewhere. It would be drawing too much upon the endurance of the public, were I to paint many pictures of a soldier's death-bed. But one I subjoin, from which, if it make the same impression upon others, which it has made upon myself, they will not turn away with indifference. The tale is short, and I will not try to lengthen it unnecessarily.

On the 22d day of June 1836, was committed to the grave-yard of Chelsea Hospital, George Thornton, aged forty-two. He obtained his admission to the asylum in the March previous, being then manifestly in a dying state, and he lingered among us but a few short months, ere death put a period to his sufferings. To the last he exhibited the appearance which belongs to what is called the wreck of a very fine man. His height might be about six feet two. His features were high and regular; his eye full and of an azure blue; his hair dark brown, and of most luxuriant growth. His malady, for he died of decline, flushed his cheek, as it is wont to do, and added not a little to his remarkably interesting appearance. I attended him, as in

duty bound, on his death-bed, and found him all that in such a situation I could have wished. Humble he was, yet not dejected ; honest, frank, and such as became the Christian soldier ; no wise inclined to hide, far less to extenuate his own failings, and shy to speak of his own good qualities. I rejoice to say, that he gave me his fullest confidence ; and it may not be out of place if I describe the circumstances which led immediately to a consummation on my part so heartily desired.

I had visited him frequently, spoken to him on the most important of all subjects, and administered to him all the consolations which, when sickness presses sore, it is possible for one man to administer to another. He was always glad to see me ; indeed, however weak he might be, however jaded and worn down, his countenance invariably brightened when I drew my chair beside his bed. It is right, however, to add, that on such occasions I am not in the habit of confining my conversation with my invalids to one subject only. We generally go together over the events of other days, and, I trust, are not forgetful to draw from them the

great lessons which they teach. Such had been my practice with Thornton; and he had been not only communicative in the extreme, but, as it seemed to me, made happy by the attention with which I listened to his tales. It chanced on one occasion that he did not meet me with his usual glee: he seemed low, and out of spirits.

“There is something on your mind, Thornton,” said I. “You need my assistance in some way: how can I serve you?”

“Nothing, sir,” was the answer. “I thank God, I am in peace with all the world; and I trust in my Redeemer for the forgiveness of those sins which I have committed against my God. Yet there is one little matter.”

“I thought so,” said I. “What is it? Speak out, and depend upon your wishes being complied with.”

“My Waterloo medal, sir,” replied Thornton. “I should not like it to be lost. I could wish it to be kept in my family, and to go down from generation to generation as an heir-loom. There is nothing on my mind but that.”

I was much struck with the earnestness with which the poor fellow expressed himself; and said to myself, "Who, after this, can doubt that British soldiers value to the full as highly, the badges which they earn by their good conduct, as any set of men living?" Of course I made haste to assure him that, as far as my exertions could go to secure the end, his wishes should be carried into effect.

"Will you then, sir, take care of the medal?" said he.

"Surely, Thornton," replied I. "But what must I do with it? Are you married? Have you any children?"

"No sir, no," replied Thornton hurriedly. "I am not married. My brother is the person to whom I wish the medal to be sent. He lives at Preston, in Lancashire, and is by trade a wheelwright. Write to him, if you please, and tell him how my last hours were spent, and what my wishes are in reference to the medal. And yet I have no right to give you all this trouble, without stating my reasons for preferring him to the rest of my family. Have you patience to listen to a soldier's tale, which

contains very little out of the ordinary course of events, unless it be, perhaps, at the outset."

I told him, as may be believed, that I gladly would; and he began as follows.

"I am a native of Preston, in Lancashire. My father was a little farmer, occupying about thirty acres of land, near the town;—my mother a pious and good woman, to whom her children stand indebted for the greatest of all blessings,—an early religious education. Do not, however, misunderstand me. We were not Methodists, sir. We were brought up strictly to our church, which we attended regularly as the Lord's day came round; but we never went to any other place of worship. 'Boys,' our mother used to say, 'you will find all that is necessary for your well-being here, and your salvation hereafter, in the Bible and Prayer-Book. Remain ye steady to your church. Your forefathers never swerved from it, and they lived like men, and died like Christians. Walk ye in their footsteps, and ye will do well.' And I thank God, that, essentially speaking, we have never forgotten her advice. You know, sir, what a soldier's life is,

and need not therefore that I should tell you how lightly these things are too often esteemed in the army. But I can answer for myself, that, though guilty of many errors and follies, I never went so far wrong as to think or speak slightingly of my religion ; and I feel at this moment the great comfort of being able to say so.

“ There were four of us, lads, and two girls, all of whom still survive ; though one, and he the stoutest of the whole, will have probably run his course ere many days are over. We were all taught to read and write, and keep accounts ; and all made to feel from childhood that our fortunes being in a great measure in our own hands, there was nothing so disreputable as habits of idleness. My eldest brother was reared up to country work, he being the first in a condition to assist his father,—and he has done well. My second brother became a stocking-weaver, and rubs on, sometimes in plenty, sometimes poor enough, but always respectable. I was myself the third son ; after me came our two sisters ; and last of all stood the boy to whom

I wish my medal to be sent. That was a youth indeed, sir ! They used to say of me, that Nature had favoured me, and, shrunk and faded as this frame now is, you may, perhaps, be able to discover some evidences that it once was otherwise. But he —— No, sir ; you never set your eyes on any creature so beautiful. His fair sunny locks, his pale smooth cheek, his soft blue eye, — they were like the light of heaven. And then his figure ; it resembled the fawn,—so graceful, so springy, so slender, that you did not know which to admire the most,—its pliability or its endurance. No wonder that the girls should have run after him, wherever he went ; no wonder that he should have forgotten himself, and caused some pain to the hearts of those that loved him most.

“ Willy was my junior by four years ; and having been in infancy and childhood extremely delicate, I learned to regard him more in the light of a son than of a brother. He was dear to me as my own soul ; so much so, that not even his mother’s partiality, undisguised as it was, ever stood between him and my affections.

And in spite of a temper somewhat wayward, the natural result of constant indulgence, Willy loved me in a degree commensurate with the affection that I bore for him. If others crossed or grieved him, it was always to me that he told his tale : if sickness bowed his head, he would come and lean it upon my shoulder. In his little grievances I was always appealed to for redress : out of his scrapes, and he ran into many, it was my especial business to deliver him. Willy was more fond of dances and wakes than our parents, quiet, though not austere people, approved of ; and would occasionally steal out at night to join his companions after the family were gone to bed. I did not like the proceeding, and told him so ;— but what could be done ? His entreaty was always so urgent, his wish so eloquently expressed, that there was no resisting it. ‘ Well, then, this time and no more, Willy,’ was my invariable reply. But, somehow or other, neither he nor I kept our resolutions ; and the last time, that had been so often talked of, never came at all.

“ There were in our village several public-

houses, and there prevailed, of course, a strong spirit of rivalry among the publicans. One kept the best fiddler in the place; another sold the best beer; — and both had their adherents. But Willy's favourite haunt was the sign of 'The Red Rose,' behind the bar of which stood Lucy Grey, the prettiest girl in all Lancashire. I can't blame him for that, nor do I; for Lucy was precisely the sort of creature whom no young man could see and fail to love. With me, too, she had long been on terms of friendship. I was not much given in those days to visit such places, for we brewed our own beer at home, and were too busy to become sots; but Lucy's black eyes presented so powerful an attraction, that I could not always resist them. Out of this, moreover, an intimacy sprang up, which I found, for a while, to be delightful. How sweet were our walks on a Sunday evening, Lucy in the midst, and Willy and I on either side! How full of music was her voice! — how pure, how chaste, how correct her whole behaviour! — for her occupation had not taught her to cast modesty aside; and the rudest of

her customers felt and paid respect to her principles. Lucy was of just the same age with my brother, — that is, eighteen; I was two-and-twenty: and I don't deny that, if ever hope came to maturity in my soul, it was when I ventured to say, that one day or other I might be able to bring these two beautiful creatures into closer companionship, by placing them one towards the other in the relation of brother and sister.

“ My eldest brother having taken a small farm of his own, I became, in his room, my father's assistant; while Willy, at his own request, was bound apprentice to a wheelwright. His master loved him as everybody else did, and declared that he would become the best tradesman in the neighbourhood. In consideration, too, of the progress which he made, something was abated of the time of his vassalage; and at eighteen he was, though nominally still an apprentice, put upon the same footing with the journeymen. Thus matters stood, when an event befell which gave a totally new direction to my fortunes, and threatened, at one moment,

to bring ruin upon his. Alas ! I hardly know how to speak of it ; but I must, for I have undertaken to tell you the truth.

“ I loved Lucy Grey. She was never absent from my thoughts by day ; she was the constant subject of my dreams by night. With her in my mind I pursued my labours cheerfully, and looked forward, as I took my recreation, to the period when, being in a condition to maintain a wife, I might, without acting unfairly by her, offer her my hand. My father, you must know, was very liberal in his mode of dealing with his children. He gave us the full value of what we earned ; and, as soon as I had ascertained the real state of my own feelings, I began to save up a little store. It grew constantly larger ; by slow degrees, no doubt ; for being now, as it were, my own master, I was bound to pay for my keep. But shilling after shilling, and crown after crown, were dropped into the money-box, till at last I could calculate on being worth ten pounds. ‘ Now then,’ said I to myself, ‘ though this be but a small nest-egg, it is still something ; and what should hinder me from telling Lucy how my views point ? If she think as I do, she

may, perhaps, be able to save also ; and at the end of a year or two, we may take some small holding, and begin. I think I shall speak to her on Sunday next, when Willy, I know, will be at his brother's, in Preston.

“Such was the tenor of my thoughts on Thursday, while I employed myself, as usual, in loading the cart for the morrow's market ; and very happy was I in the prospects that seemed to lie before me. For though nothing had yet passed between Lucy and me beyond common civilities, I thought that her smiles were very sweet, and her looks always kinder than those of an ordinary acquaintance. I dare say the expression of my countenance was in agreement with those feelings ; for you know, sir, it is a hard task to look grave when our hearts are merry : at least so it must have appeared in my case to Willy, who came into the yard just as I had tied up my last basket, and placed it in the cart.

‘You have a light heart, George,’ said he ; ‘may it always continue so ! I only wish that mine were less burthened than it is.’

“I gazed upon the youth, who for some days

past had rather avoided than sought my society. He was unusually pale; his eyes looked red as if he had been weeping; and his whole manner was that of one, within whose breast care has begun to bite sharply. I saw that there was something materially wrong with him, and I made haste to inquire into it. At first he seemed to shrink from my questions. His answer, repeated over and over again, was this, 'Pooh, pooh! there is nothing wrong with me. I know what I have done, and I have calculated the consequences. It may be rash, but there's no help for it now.'

'No help for what, Willy?' demanded I, 'You have acted rashly, you say, and are aware of the consequences, and yet would conceal the whole matter from me. Is this right? have I deserved it at your hands?'

"Willy's eyes filled, and he looked at me very mournfully. 'No, George,' said he, 'it is not right. You have not deserved that I should keep any secret from you. But this,—oh, I do not know how it is to be told even to you.'

'Nay, nay, my dear boy,' said I, taking him in my arms, 'keep no secrets from me. What

is the matter? Speak out, and do not distrust my will, whatever may be my lack of power, to befriend you as I have ever done.'

'Oh, George,' cried he, leaning his face upon my shoulder, 'what must I say? You have helped me out of many scrapes; you have stood between me and many sorrows; but all were the merest trifles compared with this. What a wretch I am! what misery have I not brought on all whom it was my duty to please and render happy!'

'Willy,' said I to him solemnly; for there passed over my own mind, I could not tell why, a feeling of deep solemnity, 'if you have done aught that is calculated to bring serious hurt upon yourself, upon your family, or upon any other human being, I pray you make a clean breast of it, and you and I will take counsel together, so as to avert, if it be possible, the consequences of your error. Depend upon it there is nothing so fatal to a person in your situation as the attempt to reserve his griefs for his own secret meditation.'

"Willy's bosom heaved. I felt it rise and fall, as he leaned like a dead man in my arms ;

and my spirit yearned over him with more than a mother's affection. I pressed him to my heart, and again entreated him to speak out.

‘But you will so despise me, George; you will so blame me. Nay, and more than all, you cannot help me; no one can help me. I have sown the seed, and must reap the crop; I have brewed the malt, and must drink the beer.

‘I tell you, Willy, that whatever your case may be, I will at least give to it my best consideration; and you cannot, for a moment, doubt my wish to serve you, whatever personal sacrifice may be demanded of me.’

‘Well then you shall know all,’ cried the poor boy. ‘Lucy Grey——’

“I started involuntarily as he uttered her name, but controlled myself almost immediately afterwards. But the movement had not been lost on him. ‘What’s the matter?’ cried he.

‘Oh, nothing in the world,’ answered I; ‘only a slight cramp. I have been hard at work, you know, these four hours, and am tired a little: that’s all, so go on.’

‘I was going to tell you,’ said he, rising, ‘that Lucy and I have been long attached to

one-another. Young as we are, for these last eighteen months I have been engaged to make her my wife, and we have lived in consequence on terms of the greatest familiarity during the whole of that time. We have had many a sweet walk together when you were not by, and often has she been my partner both at the Red Rose and elsewhere. Neither did we ever fall out till yesterday. I can't tell how it happened. I am sure that I never meant to vex her. It is true enough that Mary Kettle has made advances to me repeatedly ; and I can't deny that, just for the amusement of the hour, I have now and then given her encouragement ; but I little dreamed that Lucy would take the matter seriously up. However, she did so. We had words. She accused me of jilting her ; I denied the charge. She showed me a silly letter that Mary had written to me, without relating how it came into her possession ; and I, being very angry, accused her, in my turn, of dealing dishonourably. Well, from less it came to more, till in the end we parted, after I had told her, with an oath, that she would repent her folly to the latest day of her life. Away I

then went to the White Rose, and there, being heated with anger, and inflamed with drink, I took on with a recruiting party of the Life Guards. George, I enlisted. I am now, in point of fact, a soldier, and there is the end of it.'

"Sir, my brother's statement overthrew at once all the visions of happiness which I had cherished for years. Lucy, on whose love my heart was fixed, had given her affections to another, and that other was Willy; and do not suppose that the knowledge of this truth failed to go through me like a ball. I felt it freeze my very heart's blood. Yet were my selfish sufferings inadequate to produce an insensibility to the thorough wretchedness of my brother's situation. Mind, sir, I do not intend to speak disrespectfully of a soldier's life. My own experience has taught me that if a man do his duty, he cannot be happier anywhere than in a good regiment; but I was then without experience. Besides, Willy had been to us all as the apple of our eye from his infancy, and I knew that his constitution was every way incapable of sustaining the fatigues even of home

service. I therefore could not but look upon his tale as one of utter misery.

‘And must you go?’ demanded I.

‘There is no help for it,’ replied he; ‘unless I could find a substitute, which, in this place, is not very likely to offer. And yet for myself I would not care; but Lucy—poor Lucy—the news will break her heart. And my mother, too, she will not long survive it.’

“I lifted the young man with both my hands from his recumbent position, and held him at arm’s length from me. His face was deadly pale; and his blue eye, usually so bright and full of meaning, seemed dead with sorrow. For myself, I was like one who walks in his sleep. What to me was now country or home? My father did not need my assistance: he was yet able to provide for himself; and when his strength failed, he had other sons to rely upon. I had no wife; it was not now probable that I ever should have one; and my mother, I well knew, would bear with the loss of me far more easily than with the loss of her youngest-born.

‘Willy,’ said I, ‘even out of this difficulty

it shall be my business to deliver you. Stay you at home, marry Lucy, and be happy. In my box upstairs you will find a purse with ten pounds : take them, and let them be to you what they were meant to be for me—the beginning of your fortunes. I will be the substitute for you. 'Nay, nay, boy,' continued I, perceiving that he wished to interrupt me, 'I will not be contradicted. A soldier's life will suit me far better than it could suit you ; and by going in your place, I shall save from much suffering others besides yourself, that are very dear to me. So, not one word in opposition ; but come and lead me to your sergeant, who will not, I dare say, refuse an exchange which promises to give to his corps one whose bodily powers, at least, are not often surpassed.'

"It is right that you should understand how perfectly this determination of mine went against my brother's wishes. He positively refused, for a while, to adopt my scheme ; nor was it, indeed, till I had assured him that a soldier I would be, either for him, or on my own account, that he agreed to refer the question to our pa-

rents. Over what followed I am willing to draw a veil. There was much weeping; there were reproaches heaped on Willy; there was a vain effort made to find a substitute somewhere else; but at last my proposal was accepted, and I entered his Majesty's service. I got no bounty, to be sure, for I went as the substitute for another, who, repenting just in time, was enabled, through my means, to purchase his own release. Yet, on my own account, I did not regret the circumstance. The bounty-money would have been nothing personally to me, for I should have given it all, as I gave my little savings, to Willy and his bride. However, on their accounts, it was a pity. Still I left them, if not quite contented, at least cheerful and resigned; and in two years afterwards learned, with as much fortitude as you might expect me to exercise, that they were married."

The relation of so much of his early career quite exhausted the strength of my patient. He could not go further; neither, indeed, would I permit him to make the effort, but, promising to return next day, I left him. I did

not forget my engagement, but, at the appointed hour, was at his bed-side, upon which he was sitting up, supported by pillows.

“Now, Thornton,” said I, “see that you are able to bear the excitement, before you try to continue your narrative. It interests me very much, but I must not allow you to exhaust, and wear yourself out, for my amusement.”

“I have nothing more to tell, sir,” replied he, “that can in the slightest degree agitate or disturb me. From the day on which I joined the regiment in Knightsbridge barracks, up to the hour of my discharge, my life has differed in nothing from that of soldiers in general; and you know what that is.”

“True, Thornton,” answered I; “but you have seen some service. Your medal attests your presence in one field, at all events; and the estimation in which you hold it, shows that you do not look back upon your conduct that day with shame.”

“No, sir,” answered Thornton, his countenance lighting up as the memory of other years came back upon him, “I did my duty that day, as others can testify, and a hard day’s work it

was. But both Jack and I stood it out as well as the best of them."

"Who was Jack?" asked I.

"My horse, sir," was the answer; "the first horse I ever mounted in his Majesty's service, and the last. He was but a colt at Waterloo; but such a colt! His legs at the fetlock were as slender as my wrist; his shoulder was perfect; and as to his temper and bottom, they might be equalled, but they could not be surpassed. I declare that I loved that animal as if he had been a rational creature; and he would have followed me through the streets of London like a dog."

"Are the men generally fond of their horses? We have a notion that, in this respect, our cavalry come far behind the Germans. What does your experience enable you to say?"

"I have not seen much of the German dragoons," replied Thornton. "And as to our own, they treat their horses well or ill, according as their own tempers happen to be good or bad. But of this you may be assured, sir, that the good soldier is always more careful of his horse than of himself."

“ I believe you,” answered I. “ But how do the bad men misuse their horses ?”

“ In many ways,” replied he. “ A man of a cross temper is sure to spoil the temper of his horse, by beating and kicking, and always speaking to him angrily. A drunken man will sell the very corn for drink. A lazy man will never go to the stable, except when he is obliged to do so ; and on the march thinks he has done enough, when he has taken off the saddle, and given his horse some water. But that which annoyed me most of all was to see a man, appointed for guard on the morrow, dress his horse carefully over-night, and then tie him up in his stall so tightly, that the poor brute could not by possibility lie down. This is a shocking cruelty ; and I am sorry to say it sometimes takes place.”

“ You say that your horse was a great favourite with you : tell me how he behaved at Waterloo.”

“ Oh, nobly, sir. I always treated him well, and he repaid me for it that day. We made our famous charge, as you know. The ground was fetlock deep with mud, and our horses

had suffered much from fatigue and exposure the evening before ; but the French were in this respect no better off than we, and we knocked them down like nine-pins. I went on with my comrades, and kept hammering away with all my strength, till, Jack beginning to get blown a little, I pulled up, and looked about. You may judge of my surprise when I found myself alone. I had edged a good deal to the left of the line, where the noise was so great, that I became unconsciously separated from the rest of the squadron ; and now I saw them very much broken, and retiring from a body of lancers that had taken us in flank. Two of the lancers were already in my rear, and more seemed to be pushing for the same position ; so I felt that there was no time to lose. I wheeled Jack about, and dashed right between the Frenchmen. One of them ran at me on the right. I parried his thrust, and with the hilt of my sword struck him a heavy blow in the face, which tumbled him from his saddle. At the same time a slight turn of the wrist brought Jack round upon his haunches, and placed me right in front of the

other. His lance was already so close to me, that I had barely time to beat it upwards, by which means the point took the crest of my helmet, and rolled it on the ground. I believe that I clove that man's head in two, right through his cap. At all events he fell, and I had no time to examine whether he was dead or alive : for, rapidly as these events had passed, they gave five or six more the opportunity of coming up on all sides of me. There was nothing for it, therefore, but to turn tail ; so away I galloped as fast as Jack could carry me. The pursuit was hot. I heard the enemy close behind, and fancied that they were gaining on me, when all at once I found myself in front of a wide ditch or drain. I cannot deny that the sight of such an impediment at such a moment was the reverse of agreeable ; for the odds against me were too great, and quarter is not to be expected when men's blood is hot. I patted Jack on the neck, and said, ' You must take it, boy.' You would have thought, sir, that the animal understood me. He never swerved. There was no need for spur, but clear and clean he went over, as if I had just

taken him fresh out of the stable at Knightsbridge. None of the enemy ventured to follow, so I slackened my pace, and rode back at leisure to the line."

"And what became of you and your horse afterwards?"

"You may believe, sir, that if I liked the animal before, my love for him was increased by this an hundred fold. Till the battle ended, however, I could not quit his back, and he took me through gallantly; but no sooner were we ordered to dismount than to him all my attention was directed. I can't much blame the others for failing in that particular. No forage was issued out to us. The grass and green crops were all trodden into mud, and the men, more wearied than the horses, lay helpless in the midst of it. But I could not think of sleeping till I had at least done my best to fill Jack's belly. Away I went, therefore, looking hither and thither, till at last under the lee of a ruined house close to the road-side, I came upon a detachment of the artillery, which had brought up with them both water and oats, and were baiting their horses.

Sir, I could not withstand the temptation. I ran back for Jack, led him quietly up, put his nose into the trough with the artillery-horses, and filled my haversack with corn out of the bag. It was the only theft I ever committed in my life. But my conscience has never disturbed me for it; inasmuch as Jack, to my great delight, ate it up with all the relish in the world, and was as ready for the march, when daylight came in, as if the battle of Waterloo had never been fought."

"And what became of Jack afterwards?"

"I rode him, sir, all the time I was in the regiment; and left him, when I was discharged, an old horse, but still one of the best belonging to it."

The man who in his dying moments could speak in such terms of the animal that carried him safe through the perils of the crowning day, could not be otherwise than an enthusiastic soldier. Such at least was my impression, at the time; and subsequent enquiries, which I felt it incumbent on me to make, entirely confirmed it. I find that in the course of twenty

years' service, he had never once incurred the censure of his superiors. Though high-spirited and lively, he rarely overstepped the strict line of sobriety, and then only when some particular occasion appeared to extenuate, if it might not justify the excess. But that which more than all other traits assured me of his excellence, was the esteem and respect in which he appeared to have been held by his fellow-soldiers. "He was always ready to help a comrade at a pinch," was the character which I received of him from every quarter; and I must acknowledge that, in my view of such matters, it would be difficult to merit a higher recommendation.

I have but a few words more to add. According to Thornton's request, I wrote to his brother, enclosing the medal, which was accepted gratefully, and is now, I doubt not, cherished as it deserves to be by its possessor. For he who won it, did not long survive the interview which I have described above,—the spirit of the man having alone sustained his infirmities during the period of his sojourn in

the hospital. Moreover, as if there had been between the lives of the rider and the horse some strange sympathy, Jack brought his gallant career to a close within a day or two of the decease of his former master. It will probably be in the recollection of some among my readers, that there appeared in the Morning Chronicle of, I forget what precise date, an account of the death of a favourite horse belonging to the second regiment of Life Guards. The noble animal had become such a favourite in the corps, that, long after he ceased to be serviceable as a charger, the men led him about from one quarter to another, while the officers supported him out of their private stores. That horse was Jack. During three-and-twenty years he had been the admiration of all who knew him; and he died at last, as became him, still attached to the regiment.

Here then I lay aside my pen. Much yet remains to be told, from which the wise may derive an increase of wisdom, the upright and the brave an accession to their courage and

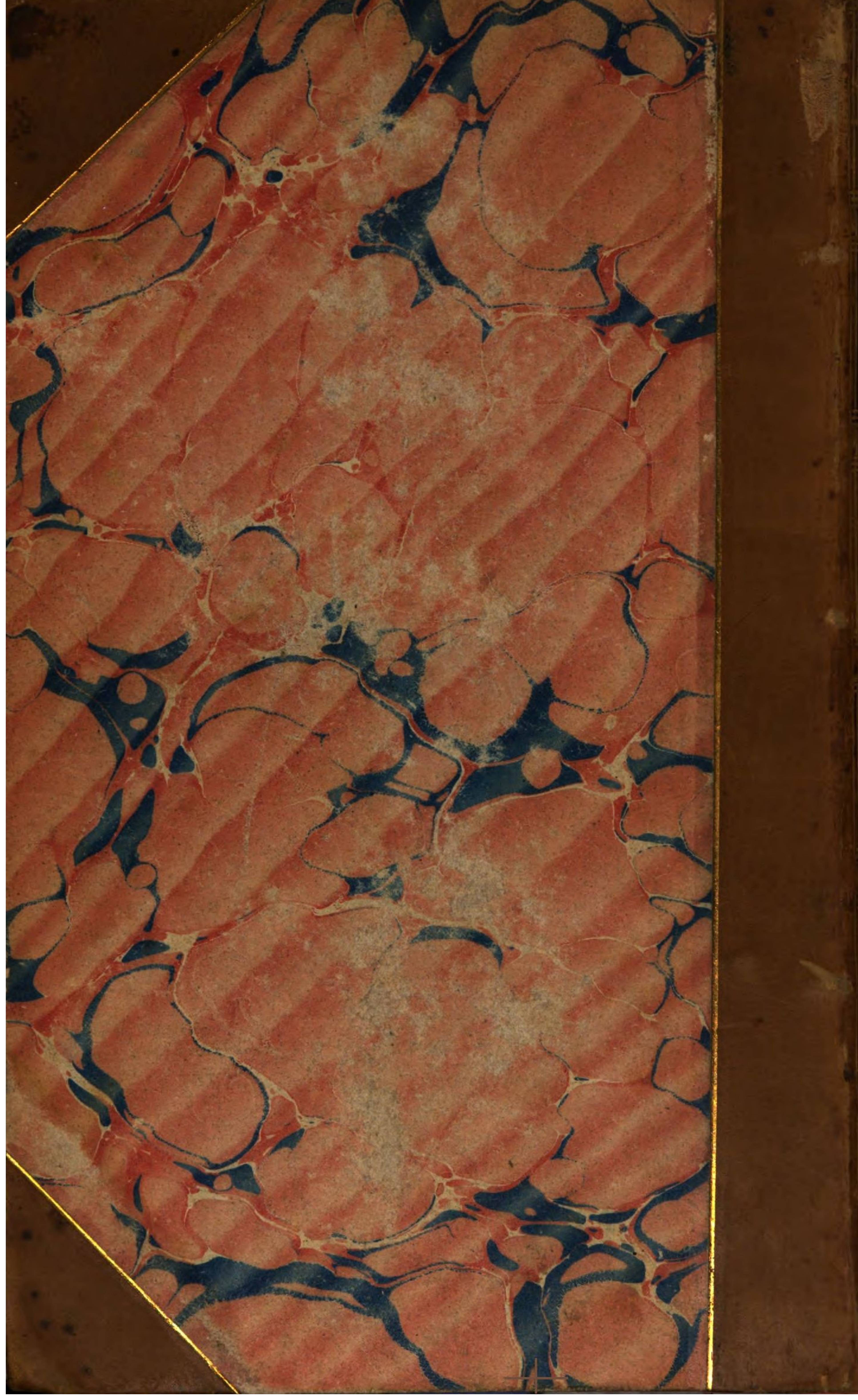
integrity ; and on some future occasion I may again resume it. But for the present I cease, praying my reader to think kindly of the inmates of Chelsea Hospital, and, for the sake of those whose chronicler he has undertaken to be, not to deal too severely with the chaplain.

THE END.

integrity; and on some future occasion I may
 again resume it. But for the present I cease.
 I pray my reader to think kindly of the in-
 stance of Chelsea Hospital, and for the sake of
 those whose character he has undertaken to be-
 not to deal too severely with the physician.

LONDON :

PRINTED BY SAMUEL BENTLEY,
 Dorset Street, Fleet Street.



Gleig, George R.,

Chelsea hospital, and its traditions in three volumes

Bd.: 3

London (1838)

Brit. 231 d-3

urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10279917-2